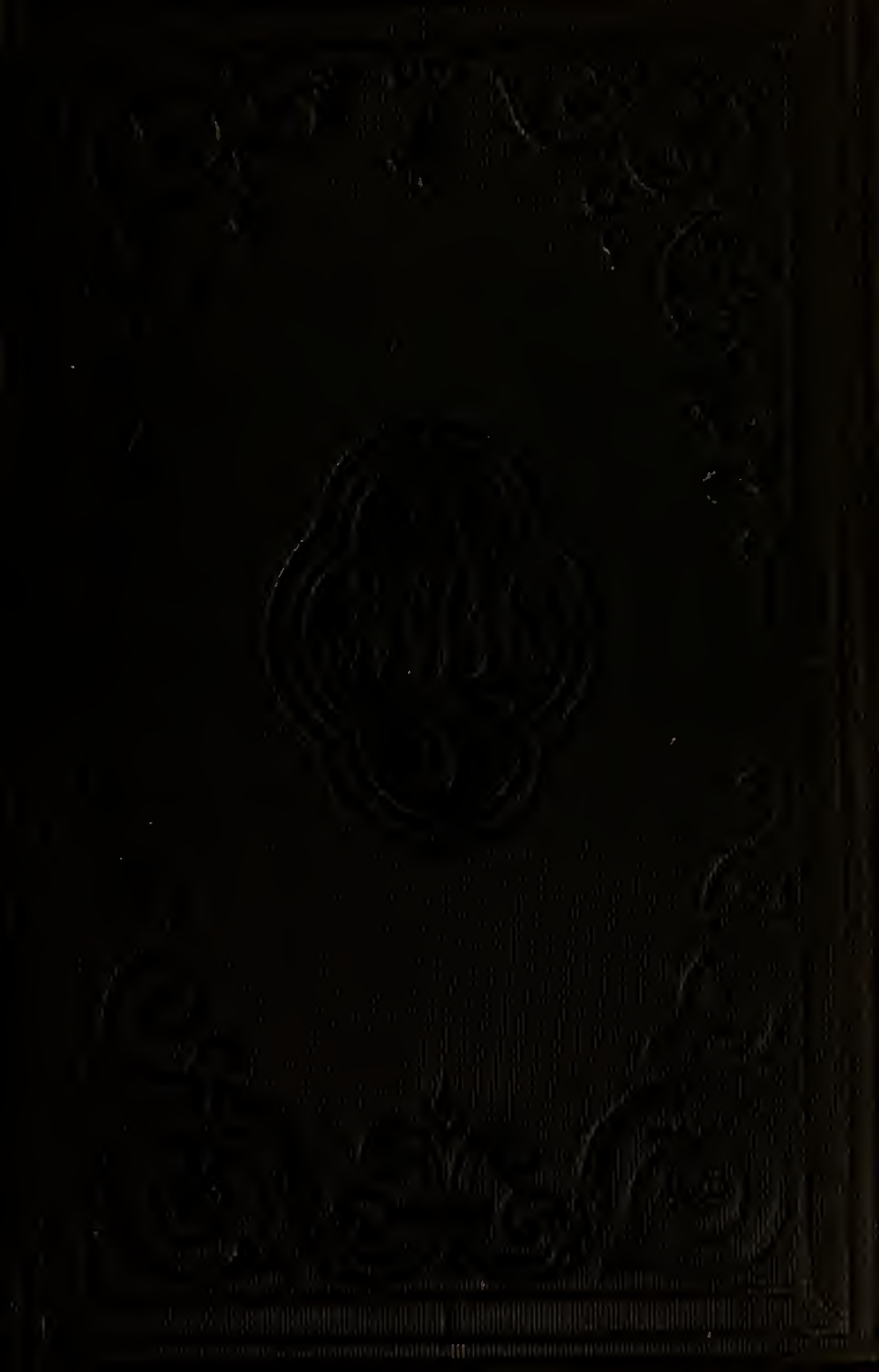

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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

By ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY CALLED METHODISM," ETC.

VOLUME II

THE PLANTING AND TRAINING OF AMERICAN METHODISM

NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: CURTS & JENNINGS

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HISTORY

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Annual Conferences before the Organization of the Church — Their Character and Powers — Philadelphia Session of 1775 — Important Success — John Cooper — Robert Lindsay — William Glendenning — William Duke — John Wade — Daniel Ruff at Abbott's Family Altar — Edward Dromgoole — First Baltimore Session, 1776 — Its Character — Freeborn Garrettson joins it — Great Prosperity — Methodism tends Southward — Nicholas Watters — James Foster — Isham Tatum — Francis Poythress — Richard Webster — Session of 1777 — Scenes at it — Continued Success — The "Sacramental Question" — Caleb B. Pedicord — John Tunnell — Reuben Ellis — Le Roy Cole — John Dickens — John Littlejohn — Prominent Characters of the Ministry of these Times — First Conference in Virginia, 1778 — Troubles of the Times — The "Sacramental Controversy" — James O'Kelly — Richard Ivey — A Scene in his Preaching — John Major — Power of his Eloquence — Henry Willis — Philip Gatch retires — Garrettson's Reminiscences of the Early Ministry.

For some years the infant Churches of American Methodism were content with humble "Quarterly Conferences" as their only judicatories or synods. These were held mostly in obscure places, their sessions occupying but a day or two, their members consisting of a few Itinerants, Local Preachers, Exhorters, and subordinate officials,

gathered from neighboring circuits, and their records so slight, or deemed so unimportant, that I am not aware that an official copy of any of them remains. Not till Rankin arrived, as "assistant" of Wesley, did they hold an Annual Conference. But two of these annual sessions were held prior to our present period, both in Philadelphia, the first in 1773, the second in 1774. The printed records of both scarcely cover a page and a half of the octavo Minutes. Both have already been as fully noticed as these records, and other cotemporary sources of information, allow. In the ten years now under review one session at least was held annually; in five of these years (1779–1783) ten took place; in the last year of the period (1784) there were no less than three, the final one being the memorable epoch of the Episcopal organization of Methodism.[1]

Seventeen sessions were held in these ten years, and yet their records do not exceed fifteen pages in the printed Minutes. The contrast of their original humility with the greatness of their historical results, can hardly fail to strike us as sublime. In obscurity, if not ignominy, amid poverty, persecutions, and public strifes of politics and arms that swept over them like tempests, they were laying, stone by stone, the foundations of an ecclesiastical edifice, whose dome was to cover the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the frozen zone to the Gulf of Mexico. Some of their obscure laborers were to see this grand consummation. The humble coral builders work in the obscure depths of the seas, but lay the foundations of beautiful and extended lands, upon which

[1] Minutes of Conferences, etc., vol. i, pp. 5–19. The proceedings of the session which organized the "Methodist Episcopal Church," in 1784, are not given in the Minutes of that year, but in those of 1785. One of the sessions of 1780 is not mentioned in the Minutes. It will be noticed hereafter.

nature may rear her magnificent growths, and man his communities; and science traces their work, in the foundations of the globe, as far back as the Silurian period, and, in heavenward monuments, thousands of feet above the level of the seas.

All these Annual Conferences and all subsequent sessions, down to the organization of the General or Quadrennial Conference, were considered adjourned meetings of the undivided ministry, held at different places, often widely apart, for the local convenience of the scattered itinerants. The enactments of no one session were binding, till they had been virtually adopted at all the other sessions of the same ecclesiastical year, and had thus become the expression of a majority of the ministry.[2]

The Conference of 1775 began in Philadelphia on the 17th of May, not quite one month after the outbreak of hostilities at Concord and Lexington, and but a few months after the session of the Colonial Congress in the same city. The country was surging with agitation and martial preparations. An extemporized colonial army of fifteen thousand men were confronting the royal troops before Boston. Philadelphia itself was a focus of excitement. Rankin says, "We conversed together, and concluded our business in love. We wanted all the advice and light we could obtain respecting our conduct in the present critical situation of affairs. We all came unanimously to this conclusion, to follow the advice that Mr. Wesley and his brother had given us, and leave the event to God. We had abundant reason to bless God for the increase of his work last year. We had above a

[2] I say "virtually adopted," for the determination of questions in these early Conferences was a prerogative of the General Assistant, qualified, however, by the opinion of the majority when this was obvious.

thousand added to the different Societies, and they had increased to ten circuits. Our joy in God would have been abundantly more had it not been for the preparations of war that now rang throughout this city." Asbury, believing that the consecration of the preachers, exclusively to their own work, was now more than ever needed, spent the day preceding the session in "friendly but close conversation" with them. "We spoke," he says, "plainly of our experience and doctrine." He reports the Conference to have continued from Monday till Friday, "with great harmony and sweetness of temper." He gives but three sentences to the occasion. Watters was present, but gives it only a sentence. Gatch was there, but merely gives its date.

Three candidates were admitted on trial, six probationers were received into full membership, and nineteen preachers were enrolled on the list of appointments. The returns of members amounted to 3,148, the increase was therefore 1,075, more than a third of the whole number. Considerably more than one half of these gains were south of the Potomac; nearly all of them were south of Pennsylvania, there being but an increase of forty-five in all the country north of Delaware. New York and Philadelphia, the scenes of great political excitement, had lost. Baltimore had gained more than one hundred, Norfolk more than fifty. The Brunswick Circuit, the scene of greatest prosperity and interest during these years of strife, had advanced nearly six hundred. The growth of the denomination numerically, during the three years represented in its first three Conferences, had been remarkable. It had nearly trebled its membership, and nearly doubled its traveling ministry.

The only proceedings of this Conference, aside from the reception and appointment of preachers, related to

the exchange of circuits, in some instances to take place quarterly, in others semi-annually; to the expenses of preachers from the session to their circuits, which was to be paid out of the public collections; and to a general fast in behalf of the prosperity of the Church and the "peace of America." The latter was repeated in the three ensuing years.

Of the three preachers admitted on trial—John Cooper, Robert Lindsay, and William Glendenning—we know but little. John Cooper has already been noticed as the colleague, this year, of Philip Gatch, on Kent Circuit: the youthful evangelist who after severe persecution had been expelled from his father's house. "He was probably from the Western Shore of Maryland;"[3] he traveled Circuits on the Peninsula, in New Jersey, in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, and North Carolina. The bare list of his appointments shows that he was thoroughly tossed about by the rapid transitions of the itinerancy of that day—from New Jersey across the Alleghanies to the Redstone wilderness, from Philadelphia to Tar River in North Carolina. He traveled fifteen years and fell at last in the field. The Minutes of 1789 record, with their usual brevity, his obituary: "Fifteen years in the work; quiet, inoffensive, and blameless; a son of affliction, subject to dejection, sorrow, and suffering; often in want, but too modest to complain, till observed and relieved by his friends. He died in peace."

Robert Lindsay, though reported as "admitted on trial" at this session, was so reported also in the Minutes of the preceding year. His labors in America and England have already been noticed. William Glendenning was a Scotchman, of eccentric character. He came to America, as we have seen, with Dempster and Rodda, in 1774, a

[3] Lednum, p. 145.

volunteer missionary, probably failing, through his very noticeable peculiarities, to obtain the authorization or approval of Wesley. The American Conference, in its extreme need of laborers, received him in 1775. After traveling some nine or ten years, his mind, always infirm, sunk into a species of mania, on the Brunswick Circuit, Va., where he probably overtasked his energies in the great religious excitements of that region. At the Conference of 1784 he was appointed a missionary to Nova Scotia, but positively refused to go. At the same session his brethren declined to ordain him among its new elders, alleging his "want of gifts." This fact plunged him deeper in dejection, and in a few months he ceased to travel. "He was a very unstable man,"[4] and had trances and visions. He located in 1786, but applied again for admission to the Conference, when his request was declined, the Conference believing him to be insane. He wandered about among the Societies in Virginia and North Carolina, hospitably supported by them, till an advanced age.[5]

Among the probationers admitted to full membership at this session, besides some already noticed, are William Duke, John Wade, Daniel Ruff, and Edward Dromgoole. Duke has already been alluded to as the intimate friend of good Captain Webb, to whom the captain presented his Greek Testament, still a precious relict. He had been brought up in the English Church, and, being an itinerant in Virginia, at the time of the sacramental controversy among the Methodists there, he located and returned to his original denomination, after spending some six or seven years in the Methodist ministry. Like Pil-

[4] Lednum, p. 152.

[5] He published the "Life of William Glendenning." Philadelphia, 1795.

more, Spraggs, and so many more of his fellow-itinerants, he became a Protestant Episcopal clergyman in Elkton, Cecil County, Md., where he died in 1840. "He was very small, wore the old-fashioned Methodist coat, was loved and respected as a good man, and was generally called 'Father Duke.'" He died in a good old age, and was buried at the old church in North East, Cecil County.

John Wade is supposed to have been a Virginian; his name appears but two years in the Minutes, at the end of which he disappears forever from the records of Methodism. It is presumed that he also entered the ministry of another Church.[6] Daniel Ruff has been already presented in our pages as connected with the early religious history of Garrettson. He called Garrettson into the itinerancy. He was a native of Harford County, Md., and was converted in the revival that prevailed in that region in 1771. The next year his house, near Havre de Grace, became a preaching-place for the itinerants, and in one year more Ruff himself was exhorting among his neighbors. A year later we find him in the itinerant ranks. Asbury describes him as "honest, simple, plain," but remarkably useful. His first appointment was to Chester Circuit, Pennsylvania, (1774,) where he was greatly successful. In 1775 he traveled with similar usefulness the Trenton Circuit, New Jersey. Abbott's house was now one of his homes. Ruff was powerful in prayer; and it was while conducting the family devotions of his humble fellow-laborer that the latter believed he received the grace of sanctification. It was a characteristic scene, as we have observed, Abbott being prostrated to the floor by his uncontrollable emotions. "Glory to God!" exclaimed the hearty evangelist, years afterward, "glory to God for what he then did, and since has done for poor

[6] Lednum, p. 141.

me!" It is said that Ruff labored more in New Jersey than any other itinerant of his time. He did much to found Methodism throughout that state. In 1776 he was sent to John-street, New York city—the first native American preacher stationed there. It was the last appointment made for New York during the Revolutionary War. Like most of his ministerial brethren of those times, he located, after traveling about seven years, having done effective service from Virginia to New York. Judging from the slight allusions to him in our early records, he appears to have been "a good soldier of the Lord Jesus" in the hard-fought fields of that age.

The name of Edward Dromgoole[7] appears, frequently and honorably, in the primitive publications of Methodism. We have had occasion already to notice his early co-operation with Strawbridge. His itinerant labors were extensive, mostly in Virginia and North Carolina, and continued down to 1786, though his name appears very irregularly in the Minutes.[8] After his location he settled in Brunswick County, Va., near North Carolina, and continued to be a useful laborer till his death in 1835, at the age of eighty-three.[9] As late as 1815, Asbury, passing through Virginia, preached in his house, and ordained the veteran as an elder. "He has been," says the bishop, "a faithful local preacher, respected and beloved. Two of his sons are local Deacons."

All the Annual Conferences had thus far been held in Philadelphia, but the numerical preponderance of the denomination had been fast tending southward, and the

[7] Our records give the name as Drumgole; but his son, the late Hon. Geo. C. Dromgoole, Member of Congress, gives it as in the text.

[8] "Edward Dromgoole is a good preacher, but entangled with a family," says Asbury, (Journals, anno 1780,) a probable explanation of the fact stated in the text.

[9] Lee's Life, etc., of Lee, p. 109.

next session was begun in Baltimore on the 21st of May, 1776.[10] Asbury was not present; he set out on horseback for the city, but in such exhausted health that he had to return. Rankin makes no reference to the session, except in a later allusion to its Love-feast. Watters was present, and says: "It was a good time, and I was much refreshed in meeting with my brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We were of one heart and mind, and took sweet counsel together, not how we should get riches or honors, or anything that this poor world could afford us; but how we should make the surest work for heaven, and be the instruments of saving others. We had a powerful time in our Love-feast a little before we parted, while we sat at our divine Master's feet, and gladly heard each other tell what the Lord had done, for and by us, in the different places in which we had been laboring."

This was the first Conference attended by young Freeborn Garrettson; he entered it with insupportable anxieties; he had been preaching irregularly; but the question of the consecration of his whole remaining life to the labors and trials of the itinerancy was now to be decided, and he recoiled at the prospect. "The exercise of my mind," he writes, "was too great for my emaciated frame. I betook myself to my bed and lay till twelve o'clock; then I rose up and set off. I got into Baltimore about sunset. The Conference was to begin the next day: I attended, passed through an examination, was admitted on trial, and my name was, for the first time, classed among the Methodists, I received of Mr. Rankin a written license. My mind continued so agitated, for I still felt an unwillingness to be a traveling preacher, that,

[10] Bangs says 24th of May, (i, p. 116,) erroneously. Compare Minutes. Watters, Asbury, and Lee.

after I went from the preaching house to dinner, I again fainted under my burden and sank to the floor. When I recovered I found myself in an upper chamber on the bed, surrounded by several preachers. I asked where I had been, as I seemed to be lost to all things below, appearing to have been in a place from whence I did not desire to return. The brethren joined in prayer, and my soul was so happy, while everything wore so pleasing an aspect, that the preachers appeared to me more like angels than men. And I have praised the Lord ever since, that, though unworthy of a seat among them, I was ever united to this happy family."

The Conference began on Tuesday, and concluded on Friday. It was held in the second Methodist Chapel built in the city, on Lovely Lane. This edifice had been erected about two years, but was yet hardly furnished; the seats had no backs, it had no provision for warming, and no galleries. It was still "the day of small things," though of vast hopes, with American Methodism. Rankin presided as Wesley's "assistant." The aggregate membership reported was 4,921; the increase for the year was 1,773,[11] the largest gains yet recorded. These advances were entirely in the southward fields: New York had declined during the year from 200 to 132; Philadelphia from 190 to 137; New Jersey from 300 to 150; Baltimore had advanced from 840 to 900; and Brunswick Circuit, hitherto the southernmost field, reported no less than 1,600, doubling its returns of the preceding year, after a deduction of 1,600, assigned to the new North Carolina Circuit. Twenty-five itinerants were on the roll of the Conference, a gain of five.[12] Four

[11] Bangs (i, 117) erroneously states it as 1,873.

[12] The Minutes say twenty-four, but include not the Assistant or Superintendent.

new circuits were recognized: Fairfax, Hanover, Pittsylvania, and Carolina; all in Virginia except the last, which was in North Carolina, and is the first appearance of that state in the Minutes. Methodism had been energetically pushing its conquests into the state for about three years. Pilmoor, as we have seen, passed through it preaching in 1773. Robert Williams entered it the same year, and, in the next, formed Societies within its bounds. Halifax County especially gave the denomination a hearty reception, and was the scene of many of its earliest Societies, and, for years, of its principal strength in the state.

Nine candidates[13] were received on trial, and five probationers were admitted to full membership. Among the former was Nicholas Watters, brother to the first native itinerant, William Watters. He was now about twenty-seven years old; beginning to exhort in 1772, he graduated to the regular ministry by 1776, and entered the Kent Circuit, Md. He located in 1779; but, after several useful years, spent in that relation, he resumed his travels, and died an itinerant in Charleston, S. C., in 1804. He was a consecrated man, distinguished by moral courage, ardent zeal, and unintermitted labors for the Church. "His heavenly-mindedness and uniform simplicity of deportment greatly endeared him to his brethren." Nearly his last words were, "I am not afraid to die!"[14]

James Foster, a Virginian, was among the earliest itinerants afforded to Methodism from that state; he was a "good preacher," and noted for his amenity, his "fine personal appearance" and usefulness. But excessive fasting, with excessive labors in the open air, destroyed his constitution, and his intellect at last gave

[13] Lee (p. 60) says eleven, erroneously. [14] Minutes, 1805.

way under his infirmities.[15] Before his prostration, however, he located, and retired to South Carolina, where, finding some emigrant Methodist families from Virginia, he formed among them a circuit and supplied them with preaching. Afflicted, obscure, and in distant loneliness, he was thus providentially honored as one of the founders of Methodism in that state. He re-entered the itinerancy, but retired from it finally in 1787. In his last years of mental prostration, his pious amiability never failed; he maintained the strictness of his religious habits, and the inoffensiveness of his deportment, as he wandered among Methodist families, conducting their domestic devotions with much propriety, when no longer able to minister to them in the pulpit.

Isham Tatum was a South Carolinian. After five years of useful labors in the traveling ministry he retired, and removed to the further South, where, through a long life, he diligently served the Church as a Local Preacher. He was highly respected for his deep piety and great local usefulness. In his last days he was venerated as the oldest Methodist preacher in America, if not in the world.

Francis Poythress became one of the itinerant heroes of these times; and though his last years were darkened by clouds, he is still recalled by aged Methodists with vivid interest. He was a Virginian of large estate, but of dissipated habits in his youth. The conversations and rebukes of a lady of high social position arrested him in his perilous course. He returned from her house confounded, penitent, and determined to reform his morals. He betook himself to his neglected Bible, and soon saw that his only effectual reformation could be by a religious life. He searched for a competent living guide, but, such

[15] Gatch, p. 84.

was the condition of the English Church around him that he could find none. Hearing at last of the devoted Jarratt, he hastened to his parish, and was entertained some time under his hospitable roof for instruction. There he found purification and peace about the year 1772. It was not long before he began to co-operate with Jarratt in his public labors amid the extraordinary scenes of religious interest which prevailed through all that region. Thus, before the arrival of the Methodist itinerants in Virginia, he had become an evangelist; when they appeared he learned with delight their doctrines and methods of labor, and joining them, became a giant in their ranks. In 1775 he began his travels, under the authority of a quarterly meeting of Brunswick Circuit, and, the present year, appears, for the first time, on the roll of the Conference. Henceforth, in North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky, he was to be a representative man of the struggling cause. In 1783 he bore its standard across the Alleghanies to the waters of the Youghiogheny.[16] From 1786 he served it, with pre-eminent success, for twelve years as a presiding elder. Asbury nominated him for the episcopate. "From the first," says one of the best antiquarian authorities of the Church, "he performed all the work of a Methodist preacher with fidelity and success, and for twenty-six years his name appears without a blot upon the official records of the Church among his brethren. Most of the time he filled every office, except that of superintendent, and was designated for that place by Bishop Asbury, in a letter addressed to the Conference at Wilbraham, in 1797. The preachers refused to comply with the request, simply upon the ground that it was not competent, in a yearly Conference, to elect bishops. Poy-

[16] Rev. G. Scott, in Finley's Western Methodism, p. 133.

thress, in a word, was to Methodism generally, and to the south-west particularly, what Jesse Lee was to New England, an apostle. His name stands in the Minutes of 1802 for the last time among the elders, but without an appointment, after which it disappears, and we hear no more of him until we are roused from our anxious thoughts concerning his probable fate by the startling announcement of Bishop Asbury."[17]

This "startling announcement" is an allusion of Asbury's Journals, as late as 1810, when the bishop, traveling in the wilderness of Kentucky, discovers the once "strong man armed," broken and prostrated, not by apostasy, as has sometimes been surmised, but by insanity. A relieving light breaks over his last days. We shall hereafter have occasion to refer to them.

Richard Webster retired at this Conference. He has already been noticed as one of the first Methodists of Harford County, Md.; a convert under the ministry of Strawbridge. After four years of faithful services, domestic necessities required him to limit his labors; but he pursued them zealously in his own vicinity, and lived a long, a pure, and useful life. Nearly half a century after the date of his location, we catch a glimpse of the veteran as he was just stepping into heaven. His old friend, Freeborn Garrettson, visiting the scenes of his own early ministry in Maryland, writes: "On the Lord's day morning I preached with much satisfaction in the Abington Church, and then rode six miles, and preached in a neat church lately built in the forest under the direction of old Mr. Webster, who at this time was dangerously ill. I was sent for to visit him, and found him nigh unto death, joyfully waiting until his time should come. He was among the first who embraced religion,

[17] Rev. Dr. Hamilton to the author.

when the Methodist preachers made their entrance into this part of the country, about fifty-six years ago. He is now about eighty-five years of age, and has been a preacher more than forty years. He has a large family of children and grandchildren, settled around him, while he, like a ripe shock of corn, is waiting to be taken to the garner of rest. I had sweet fellowship with him. A few days after I left him he took his departure. I bless God for this opportunity of conversing with him."

The session of 1777 began on the 20th of May, at a "preaching house," say the Minutes, "near Deer Creek, in Harford County, Md." It was the "preaching house" of John Watters, at this time one of the chief rural centers of Methodism in the state. Though the storm of war was now howling through the land, "and there were," says the historian, "fears within and fightings without in all directions,"[18] the small ministerial band assembled, not only in peace, but with gratulations over the evangelical victories of the last year. The returns showed a gain in the ministry of fully one third, and in the membership of considerably more than one third. Asbury writes: "So greatly has the Lord increased the number of traveling preachers, within these few years, that we have now twenty-seven who attend the circuits, and twenty of them were present at this Conference. Both our public and private business was conducted with great harmony, peace, and love. Our brethren who intend to return to Europe have agreed to stay till the way is quite open. I preached on the charge which our Lord gave his apostles: 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Our Conference ended with a love-feast and watch-night. But

[18] Lee, p. 62.

when the time of parting came, many wept as if they had lost their first-born sons. They appeared to be in the deepest distress, thinking, as I suppose, they should not see the faces of the English preachers any more. This was such a parting as I never saw before. Our Conference has been a great time, a season of uncommon affection. And we must acknowledge that God has directed, owned, and blessed us in the work."

Watters was present, and gives a similar record of the occasion. "It was," he says, "a time much to be remembered. The Lord was graciously with us. There appearing no probability of the contest between Great Britain and this country ending shortly, several of our European preachers thought that, if an opportunity should offer, they would return to their home in the course of the year. To provide against such an event five of us, Gatch, Dromgoole, Ruff, Glendenning, and myself, were appointed a committee to act in the place of the general assistant in case they should all go before the next Conference. It was also submitted to the consideration of this Conference whether in our present situation, of having but few ministers left in many of our parishes to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, we should not administer them ourselves, for as yet we had not the ordinances among us, but were dependent on other denominations for them, some receiving them from the Presbyterians, but the greater part from the Church of England. In fact, we considered ourselves, at this time, as belonging to the Church of England. After much conversation on the subject, it was unanimously agreed to lay it over for the determination of the next Conference, to be held in Leesburgh, the 19th of May. I never saw so affecting a scene as the parting of the preachers. Our hearts were knit together as the

hearts of David and Jonathan, and we were obliged to use great violence to our feelings in tearing ourselves asunder. This was the last time I ever saw my very worthy friends and fathers Rankin and Shadford."

Garrettson attended this Conference, with feelings very different from those which oppressed him at the preceding session. "I was greatly refreshed," he wrote many years afterward, "among these servants of God, some of whom I have never seen since, nor shall again on this side of eternity."

The membership amounted to 6,968, its increase being 2,047, the largest yet reported. The ministerial roll recorded thirty-eight names;[19] there were fourteen circuits supplied by thirty-six preachers. Two new circuits, Sussex and Amelia, were detached from that of Brunswick, Va.; two, Chester and Norfolk, which had been abandoned, were restored. Asbury's defeated plans, on the latter, were now to be resumed, notwithstanding the city lay in ashes. The name of New York is retained in the Minutes, but without an appointment; it is about to disappear in the northern clouds of the war. Before the year closes Rankin and Rodda are to disappear in them also, and all the English preachers, except Asbury, now ask for certificates of ministerial character, that they may return home honorably; but the ministry already feels strong in its native men. Watters, Poythress, Garrettson, Dromgoole, Cooper, Gatch, Ruff, and others now joining their ranks; Pedicord, Tunnell, Gill, Dickens, besides not a few who, like Abbott, were strenuously active, though not yet in the Conference: these, headed by Asbury, formed a force which rendered the denom-

[19] The estimate in the Minutes is incorrect, as it omits the superintendent or "assistant," and Asbury, in the appointments. There were thirty-six appointed besides these. Lee is also inaccurate, p. 61.

ination independent of England. Some of them were men of essential greatness of intellect and character, swaying the popular mind, through much of the middle states, for years, and recognized, at the beginning of our century, throughout the whole range of Methodism, as its leaders; but the obscurity or brevity of our primitive records has allowed them to fall into oblivion, though their works remain in ever-enlarging greatness. The historian of their cause may justly deem it a sacred duty to gather, with filial solicitude, the fast perishing memorials of their devoted lives, though he may be able to collect but vague and incoherent allusions.

Though New York receives no appointment, its returns of members are given. They are but ninety-six, less by thirty-six than in the preceding year. Philadelphia also reports but ninety-six, a loss of forty-one. New Jersey has but one hundred and sixty; she has gained but ten. The war has thinned most of the northern forces of the Church. Baltimore reports her unimpaired nine hundred. North Carolina, though but one year on the list of appointments, returns nine hundred and thirty. The chief movement of Methodism is still southward.

The question was asked in this Conference whether "in the present distress the preachers are resolved to take no step to detach themselves from the work of God the ensuing year?" It was answered, "We purpose, by the grace of God, not to take any step that may separate us from the brethren, or from the blessed work in which we are engaged." A public fast was appointed; no other business of importance is recorded; but the "question of the sacraments" was again discussed, as the citation from Watters intimates. This momentous "contest," as it was called, received no allusion, in the Minutes, from the Conference of 1773 to that of 1780. But

according to Philip Gatch,[20] it was formally revived at the present session. The question, "What shall be done with respect to the ordinances?" was asked. "Let the preachers pursue the old plan as from the beginning," was the answer. It appears, however, that already the sacramental party were too strong to be thus peremptorily silenced; and, to appease them, the possibility of an accommodation was admitted, for it was further asked, "What alteration may we make in our original plan?" And the answer was, "Our next Conference will, if God permit, show us more clearly." The subject was, accordingly, not allowed to sleep, as we shall hereafter see. Garrettson, speaking of this session, says, "The question was asked, I think, by Mr. Rankin, 'Shall we administer the ordinances?' It was debated, but the decision was suspended till the next Conference, which was appointed to be held in the following May in Leesburgh, Va. I shall never forget the parting prayer of that blessed servant of God, Mr. Shadford. The place seemed to be shaken with the power of God. We parted, bathed in tears, to meet no more in this world. I wish I could depict, to the present generation of preachers, the state of our young and prospering Society. We had Gospel simplicity, and our hearts were united to Jesus and to one another. We were persecuted, and at times buffeted; but we took our lives in our hands and went to our different appointments, weeping and sowing precious seed, and the Lord owned and blessed his work."[21]

Fourteen preachers were received on trial, and eight

[20] Gatch's MS. Journal, in possession of Rev. Dr. C. Elliott. See Lee's Life of Lee, p. 78, and Gatch's Mem., p. 67.

[21] Garrettson's Semi-centennial Sermon before the New York Conference.

admitted to membership. Among the former was Caleb B. Pedicord, one of the saintliest men of his age. His personal appearance is remembered as peculiarly interesting;[22] his aspect was beautiful in its combined expression of intelligence, moral refinement, and pathos. His voice, in both singing and preaching, had a dissolving power of tenderness. Marvels are told of the quiet, pathetic force of his sermons. He was a native of the Western Shore of Maryland, and was probably an early convert of Strawbridge in Frederick County, where was also his first appointment by the Conference. He continued in the itinerancy till his death, traveling and preaching with great popularity in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Virginia. He was on Baltimore Circuit at the time of the Episcopal organization of the denomination in that city, and probably shared in its proceedings. His gentle, yet commanding, character could not protect him from the persecutions of the times. Soon after he had entered upon his circuit, in Dorchester County, Md., he was attacked, on the highway, till the blood dripped down his person. He took shelter in the house of a friend, and, while his stripes were being washed, a brother of his assailant entered, and ascertaining the cruel grievance, mounted his horse, and hastily rode away, indignantly threatening to chastise the persecutor. The latter was soon overtaken, and so severely beaten that he promised never to trouble another itinerant. Pedicord could not approve such a vindication, but he might well rejoice afterward over one of those striking coincidences which so often attended the labors and sufferings of the early itinerants, for both these brothers

[22] "Those who have seen Mr. Pedicord have testified to the beauty of his person, and this casket contained a jewel of the finest polish." Ledaum, p. 201.

were subsequently seen sitting, "in their right minds," in the communion of the persecuted Methodists. The itinerant bore the scars of his wounds to his grave.

Pedicord's labors in New Jersey, in 1781, were greatly successful. He found Abbott in his new home, on Lower Penn's Neck, where the honest evangelist was much perplexed and dejected at his own comparatively slight success. "I had preached again and again," says Abbott, "and all to no purpose. I found there a set of as hardened sinners as were out of hell." Gladly, therefore, did he welcome Pedicord, hoping for a word of consolation in his discouragement. Pedicord was so distressed by Abbott's statements that he could not eat his breakfast, but retired to his chamber to pray. After some time he reappeared with a cheerful aspect. "Be not discouraged," he cried to his host, "these people will yet hunger and thirst after the word of God." In a few months "there was a great work going on in this Neck. This prophet of the Lord had such access to him as made him confident that the Lord would work."[23]

A memorable instance of his usefulness occurred on this circuit. He was an excellent singer; while riding slowly on the highway to an appointment at Mount Holly he was singing,

> "I cannot, I cannot forbear,
> These passionate longings for home;
> O! when shall my Spirit be there?
> O! when will the messenger come?"

A young soldier of the Revolution, wandering in a neighboring forest, heard him, and "was deeply touched not only with the melody of his voice, which was among the best he ever heard, but with the words, especially the last couplet." "After he ceased," writes the listener,

[23] Lednum, p. 310.

"I went out and followed him a great distance, hoping he would begin again. He, however, stopped at the house of a Methodist and dismounted. I then concluded he must be a Methodist Preacher, and would probably preach that evening." That evening the youthful soldier heard him, and Caleb B. Pedicord thus became "the spiritual father" of Thomas Ware, one of the most pure-minded and successful of early Methodist itinerants—for fifty years a founder of the denomination from New Jersey to Tennessee, from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, and, by his pen, the best contributor to its early history.[24] Pedicord's fine insight could perceive the pure worth of his young disciple, and when the latter began to labor in public the itinerant wrote him, from Delaware, an earnest summons to the itinerant field. "He who claims all souls as his own, and wills them to be saved, does sometimes, from the common walks of life, choose men who have learned of him to be lowly in heart, and bids them go and invite the world to the great supper. The Lord is at this time carrying on a great and glorious work, chiefly by young men like yourself. O come and share in the happy toil, and in the great reward! Mark me! though seven winters have now passed over me, and much of the way has been dreary enough, yet God has been with me and kept me in the way, and often whispered, 'thou art mine, and all I have is thine.' He has, moreover, given me sons and daughters too, born not of the flesh, but of God; and who can estimate the joy I have in one destined, I hope, to fill my place in the

[24] Compare Lednum, p. 310, with "Sketches of the Life and Travels of Rev. Thomas Ware," etc., p. 54. This autobiography is the best written book in our numerous catalogue of similar works. It is replete with interesting incidents and able sketches of character. It is little known, however, and has been negligently published, without index or table of contents.

itinerant ranks when I am gone! Who then will say that mine was not a happy lot? 'Tis well you have made haste; much more than I can express have I wished you in the ranks before mine eyes have closed in death on all below. When Asbury pressed me to become an itinerant, I said, God has called me to preach and woe unto me if I preach not; but I had no conviction that he had called me to itinerate. 'No conviction, my son,' said he to me sternly, 'that you should follow the direction of Him who commissioned you to preach? Has the charge given to the disciples, "Go and evangelize the world," been revoked? Is the world evangelized?' He said no more. I looked at the world; it was not evangelized. The world must be evangelized; it should long since have been so, and would have been so, had all who professed to be ministers of Christ been such as were the first Gospel preachers and professors; for who can contend with him who is Lord of lords and King of kings, when they that are with him in the character of ministers and members are called and chosen and faithful? Here the drama ends not; but the time, we think, is near—even at the door. Nothing can kill the itinerant spirit which Wesley has inspired. It has lived through the Revolutionary War, and will live through all future time. Christendom will become more enlightened, will feel a divine impulse, and a way will be cast up on which itinerants may swiftly move, and in sufficient numbers to teach all nations the commands of God." Thus, not long before his death, did he in this prophetic letter call out his "son in the Gospel" to bear forward the standard which was about to fall from his own trembling hand, and to verify, to no small extent, his sanguine predictions. "The fruit of his ministry in New Jersey was visible for at least half a century after

he had passed to his reward, and the effects of his labors are probably felt to this day."[25] In 1785 the Minutes record the decease of Pedicord in one sentence: "A man of sorrows, and, like his Master, acquainted with grief; but a man dead to the world, and much devoted to God." He was the first that fell in the itinerant field after the Episcopal organization of the Church.

John Tunnell was received on probation at the Conference of this year; a name fragrant to the Methodists of that early day, though familiar to few of our times. "He was truly an apostolic man; his heavenly-mindedness seemed to shine on his face, and made him appear more like an inhabitant of heaven than of earth."[26] He was appointed one of the original Elders at the organization of the Church in 1784, though he was not at the memorable Christmas Conference. He had gone in quest of health to the West India Island of St. Christopher's, where he was offered a good salary, a house, and a slave to wait upon him, if he would remain as a pastor; but he declined the offer, and returning, was ordained, and resumed his travels in the states with great success. "His gifts as a preacher," says Lee, "were great." He was sent in 1777 to the famous Brunswick Circuit, Va., where he labored with much usefulness; the next year he traveled Baltimore Circuit. After several years of indefatigable labors in the middle states, he was sent, by the Conference in 1787, with four itinerants, among whom was young Thomas Ware, beyond the mountains, to the "Holston country, now called East Tennessee."[27] He thus scaled the Alleghanies, and, though comparatively forgotten by us, takes historical rank among the founders of Methodism in the great valley of the West,

[25] Atkinson's Memorials, p. 204. [26] Lednum, p. 200.
[27] Ware's Life, p. 132.

its most important arena. His last appointment was in this frontier field, (1789,) where he fell at the head of a little corps of seven itinerants, who were on four circuits, after thirteen years of faithful services, a victim of consumption—a constitutional tendency developed by his exposures and fatigues. He died near "Sweet Springs," in July, 1790; his brethren bore his remains over the mountains, about five miles east of the Sweet Springs. Asbury preached his funeral sermon at Dew's Chapel, and interred him there, among the hills of Western Virginia, where he sleeps without a memorial; but his name will live forever in "the record on high," if not on earth. The Minutes of 1790 record in three sentences his obituary, and testify that he was "a man of solid piety, great simplicity, and godly sincerity; well known and much esteemed by ministers and people." He had traveled extensively through the states, and "declined in much peace." Lee says, "he was greatly lamented." "In the Conference of 1787," says Thomas Ware, "I volunteered, with two other young men, who esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than earthly treasures, to accompany Tunnell to the Holston country"—words, though brief, yet pregnant with volumes of history. Tunnell was one of the most eloquent preachers of that age; and, though bearing about with him the infirmities of incurable pulmonary disease, he traveled and labored without faltering till smitten down by death, amid the hardships of the frontier fields. Alas! that our imperfect records admit of so slight a commemoration of such saintly heroism. Asbury, in laying him in the grave, wrote: "I preached his funeral sermon; my text, 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' We were much blessed, and the power of God was eminently present. It is fourteen years

since Brother Tunnell first knew the Lord; and he has spoken about thirteen years, and traveled through eight of the thirteen states; few men, as public ministers, were better known or more beloved. He was a simple-hearted, child-like man; of good learning for his opportunities; he had a large fund of Scripture knowledge, was a good historian, a sensible Preacher, a most affectionate friend, and a great saint. He had been declining, in strength and health, for eight years, and, for the last twelve months, sinking into a consumption. I am humbled. O let my soul be admonished to be more devoted to God!"

William Gill was the bosom friend of John Tunnell, and one of the most eminent itinerants of his times; yet, like his heroic friend, is hardly known in our day. He was a native of Delaware, and the first Methodist traveling preacher raised up in that state; a man of superior intellect and acquisitions, which so impressed Dr. Rush, who attended him during a period of sickness in Philadelphia, as to dispose that great man ever afterward to defend the Methodist ministry against the prevalent imputations of ignorance and fanaticism. Rush pronounced him "the greatest divine he had ever heard."[28] The first historian of Methodism says: "From the long acquaintance I had with Mr. Gill, I am led to conclude that we had scarcely a preacher left to equal him in either knowledge or goodness. Indeed, I knew no one who had such a depth of knowledge, both of men and things, as he possessed. Both his conversation and preaching were entertaining, and with much wisdom." He was ordained an elder at the organization of the Church, "standing among the foremost." He was esteemed the most profound, the most philosophic mind in the Meth-

[28] Atkins's Memorials, p. 171.

odist ministry of his day. He labored in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware, successively, occupying important appointments, and for some years the office of "Presiding Elder," as it was afterward called. His last field was on Kent Circuit, Maryland, in 1788, where he died declaring "all is well," and closed his eyes with his own hands as he expired. He was buried at the oldest Methodist chapel in Kent County. The Minutes of 1789, noticing his death, say: "William Gill, a native of Delaware; an elder in the Church and a laborer in it for about twelve years; blameless in life, of quick and solid parts, sound in the faith, clear in his judgment, meek in his spirit, resigned and solemnly happy in his death." One of his cotemporaries remarks: "Jonathan and David were not more ardently attached to each other than were Tunnell and Gill. What raptures must they have felt at meeting in their Father's house above! Few purer spirits, I verily believe, ever inhabited tenements of clay." He suffered from the usual poverty of the itinerancy. Asbury says, "I feel for those who have had to groan out a wretched life, dependent on others—as Pedicord, Gill, Tunnell, and others whose names I do not now recollect; but their names are written in the book of life, and their souls are in the glory of God." "Even," adds another authority, "a grave-stone, with an inscription sufficient to designate his resting place, was denied him. A person who visited his grave writes: 'He died in Chestertown, Kent County, Md.; and, when a few more of the older men of this generation pass away, the probability is no one will know the place of his sepulcher, as I was unsuccessful in endeavoring to persuade the Methodists there to erect at his grave only a plain head and foot stone; but his record is on high.'" [29]

[29] Atkinson, p. 171.

Of these men, once so deservedly eminent, but now so slightly known, one of their best cotemporaries says that next to Asbury, "in the estimation of many stood the placid Tunnell, the philosophic Gill, and the pathetic Pedicord. It would be difficult to determine to which of these primitive missionaries, as men of eminent talents and usefulness, the preference should be given. Tunnell and Gill were both defective in physical strength. Pedicord was a man of much refined sensibility. They were all the children of nature, not of art; but especially Tunnell and Pedicord. A sailor was one day passing where Tunnell was preaching. He stopped to listen, and was observed to be much affected; and on meeting with his companions after he left, he said, 'I have been listening to a man who has been dead, and in heaven; but he has returned, and is telling the people all about that world.' And he declared to them he had never been so much affected by anything he had ever seen or heard before. True it was, that Tunnell's appearance very much resembled that of a dead man; and when, with his strong musical voice, he poured forth a flood of heavenly eloquence, as he frequently did, he appeared indeed as a messenger from the invisible world. Gill was eagle-eyed, and, by those whose powers of vision were strong like his, he was deemed one of a thousand; but, by the less penetrating, his talents could not be fully appreciated, as he often soared beyond them. In conversation, which afforded an opportunity for asking questions and receiving explanations, on deep and interesting subjects, I have seldom known his equal. Pedicord was a man of fine manly form, and his countenance indicated intelligence and much tender sensibility. His voice was soft and remarkably plaintive, and he possessed the rare talent to touch and move his audience at once. I have seen the

tear start and the head fall before he had uttered three sentences, which were generally sententious. Nor did he raise expectations to disappoint them. Like Tunnell, he arose as he advanced in his subject; and if he could not, with him, bind his audience with chains, he could draw them after him with a silken cord. Never was a man more tenderly beloved in our part of the country than he; and if the decision of their relative claims devolved on me, I should say there was none like Pedicord. But he was my spiritual father. Besides these, I might mention perhaps twenty others of nearly equal standing; and a number of them, perhaps, the superiors of those I have mentioned, in some respects. It is a pity that so few of this class of primitive American Methodist preachers have left any written memorial of themselves and their early labors."[30]

Such were some of the mighty agents, providentially raised up about these times, for the founding of the new Church in this new world. Though men of renown in their own day, the surprising development of the results of their own labors, under their successors, has tended to eclipse them; we scarcely find their names in our historical books; hardly should we know anything, from the many volumes on Western Methodism, of Tunnell, who carried the Methodistic banner across the mountains into Tennessee as early as 1787. Yet no heroes have appeared in that field more worthy of record than he.

But these were not the only important men who lead in the itinerancy at this period. Reuben Ellis was another; he was born in North Carolina, and was one of the earliest itinerants raised up in that state. During nearly twenty years he traversed the colonies from Pennsylvania to Georgia, "sounding the alarm"

[30] Rev. Thomas Ware.

amid the din of the Revolutionary War. His brethren honored him, by an election as one of their original elders, at the organization of the Church. He fell at his post, in Baltimore, in 1796, "leaving few behind him who were, in every respect, his equals."[31] At his death the Conference recorded an emphatic testimony of his worth and services; he was "a man," they said, "of slow but very sure and solid parts, both as a counselor and a guide: in his preaching weighty and powerful; a man of simplicity and godly sincerity. He was a faithful friend; he sought not himself; during twenty years' labor, to our knowledge, he never laid up twenty pounds by preaching; his horse, his clothing, and immediate necessaries, were all he appeared to want of the world. And although he married, in the last year of his life, he lived as on the verge of eternity, enjoying much of the presence of God. He was a man large in body, but slender in constitution. A few years before his death he was brought to the gates of eternity, and, the fall before his dissolution, was reduced very low by affliction; but he was always ready to fill any station to which he was appointed, although he might go through the fire of temptation and the waters of affliction. The people in South Carolina well knew his excellent worth as a Christian and a minister of Christ. His way opened to his everlasting rest, and he closed his eyes to see his God. It is a doubt whether there be one left in all the connection of higher, if of equal standing, piety, and usefulness."

Le Roy Cole, a Virginian, was received this year on probation. He also was one of the first elders of the Church, and served it more than fifty years as a traveling and local preacher. He "triumphed over death" in 1830, aged nearly eighty-one years,[32] having lived to see

[31] Lednum, p. 196.

[32] Minutes, 1832.

the cause, for which he so long labored and suffered, prevail over all the land.

John Dickens was also a notable man of these times. He was born in London in 1746, studied at Eton College, emigrated to America before the Revolution, joined the Methodists in 1774, and traveled extensively in Virginia and North Carolina from 1777 till 1782, when he located, but continued to labor diligently in the latter state. Asbury met him there in 1780, when Dickens framed a subscription paper for a seminary, on the plan of Wesley's Kingswood School; the first project of a literary institution among American Methodists. It resulted in Cokesbury College.

At the close of the war Asbury induced him to go to New York, where he took charge of John-street Church in 1783; the first married preacher who occupied its parsonage. His salary was a hundred pounds a year.[33] His labors were successful in gathering together the fragments of the Church, so seriously broken by the late war. Asbury arrived among them the next year and said, "They appeared more like Methodists than I have ever yet seen them." Dickens was here, the first American preacher to receive Coke and approve his scheme of the organization of the denomination. He had an important agency in that great event. In 1785 he traveled Bertie Circuit, Va. He was reappointed to New York in 1786, '87, '88. In 1789 he was stationed in Philadelphia, and there began one of the greatest institutions of American Methodism, its "Book Concern;" there also we shall see him depart to heaven by a triumphant death, in the memorable outbreak of the yellow fever in 1798.

John Dickens was one of the soundest minds and

[33] Wakeley, p. 300.

ablest preachers of the early Methodist ministry; a good scholar in English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Mathematics; singularly wise and influential in counsel, and mighty in the pulpit—"one of the greatest and best men of that age; as it was said of Whitefield, he preached like a lion."[34] "He was," says Ware, "not only one of the most sensible men I ever knew, but one of the most conscientious." "For piety," says Asbury, "probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found either in Europe or America."

John Littlejohn was also a distinguished man of these times; an Englishman whose parents brought him to this country and settled in Virginia, about his eleventh year. In his seventeenth year he was converted under the ministry of John King. In 1774 he was one of twelve Methodists who formed the first Society in Alexandria, on the Potomac. He became their leader, and the next year began to preach. Watters called him into the itinerancy in 1776. He was driven from the field by the persecutions on Kent Circuit in 1778, and, having married, settled in Leesburgh, Va., where he swayed no small influence, in both civil and religious life, down to 1818, when he removed to Kentucky. During many years he was laborious as a local preacher. The Baltimore Conference of 1831 readmitted him; he was immediately transferred to the Kentucky Conference as a superannuated preacher, and "died triumphantly" in 1836, in his eightieth year, after a ministerial life of sixty years. His superior intellect, and "especially his great eloquence,"[35] gave him pre-eminence in the pulpit above most of his brethren.

In reviewing the recruits of the ministry for the pres-

[34] Lednum, p. 198. [35] Ibid., p. 199.

ent year, a Methodist historian remarks that "Never before had such a class of strong men, such talented and useful preachers, entered into the itinerancy, to labor in the American field of Methodism. Reuben Ellis was a 'weighty and powerful preacher.' Le Roy Cole lived long, preached much, and did much good. John Dickens was in literature, logic, zeal, and devotion, a Paul among the preachers. John Littlejohn was but little his inferior. William Gill was pre-eminently astute and philosophic. John Tunnell was an Apollos, and Caleb B. Pedicord was everything that could be desired in a Methodist preacher."[36]

The sixth Annual Conference began at Leesburgh, Va., on the 19th of May, 1778. It was the first session held in that province, then the chief field of Methodism, comprising nearly two thirds of its members. But a graver reason led the Conference to this interior and comparatively remote locality. It was a desolate year to both the country and the Church. Philadelphia and New York were both in possession of the British; the waters of Maryland were occupied by the royal fleet, and general dismay prevailed. All the English itinerants, save Asbury, had fled, and he was in confinement at the house of Judge White. A few days before this Conference he records, there, that "two of our preachers have been apprehended, rather than do violence to conscience; but the men by whom they were both taken were dangerously wounded within a few weeks after they had laid hands upon them. I am now resigned to my confinement, and am persuaded that God, by his providence, will show me when and which way to go." On the day on which his fellow-laborers assembled in the session, he preached "with tender sensibility," in his asylum, on an appropri-

[36] Lednum, p. 201.

ately significant text, "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people." "The hearts of the people were greatly melted under the word; and the power of the Lord was with us in the afternoon also. We were quiet and undisturbed; and I hope the word will take root in the hearts of some who were present."

The statistics of the Conference show the effect of the public troubles. Its Minutes barely occupy a page in print; the returns of the individual circuits are not given; the aggregate membership is hastily inserted, and is but 6,095, showing a loss of 873. The ministry has diminished from 38 to 30; the list of circuits indicates important changes: New York, Philadelphia, Norfolk, and others are omitted, amounting to no less than five; but there is an addition of six, making fifteen, a gain of one. All the new fields were in the South: four in Virginia, Berkley, Fluvanna, James City, and Lunenburgh. The other two were in North Carolina, which had hitherto appeared as a solitary circuit in the Minutes, but now reports three, Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope.[37]

The early historian of Methodism laments the decrease of members as the first example of the kind, thus far, in

[37] The last two do not appear in the Minutes till the next year, but Lee (p. 63) gives them for this year. They were probably provided for at this session without being yet formally recognized. Lee, however, abounds in errors.

the history of the infant Church; he justly ascribes it, however, to the "breaches made in many of the circuits by the distresses of the war;" but the lost fields were to be won again, and to be the scenes of signal triumphs. "This," he adds, "was a year of distress and of uncommon troubles: by the war on the one hand, and persecution on the other, the preachers were separated from their flocks, and all conspired to increase the burdens of Christians."[38] Eleven probationers were received into membership in the Conference, and nine candidates admitted on trial. The additions being nine, and the decrease eight—no less than seventeen—nearly half the ministry of the preceding year must have retired at this session. We shall hereafter see, however, that locations, temporary or permanent, were not the exceptions, but the rule, down to the end of this century. Few itinerants could continue in the onerous service after their marriage, and many, unmarried, broke down their constitutions, and were compelled to retire after the labors of a few years.

As Rankin had retreated and Asbury was in seclusion, William Watters, the senior native itinerant, presided at this Conference,[39] though he was not yet twenty-seven years old. He had been appointed, as we have noticed, at the preceding session, with Gatch, Dromgoole, Ruff, and Glendenning, a committee of superintendence in case the "assistant" should leave the country before the expiration of the ecclesiastical year. Watters says of the session that, "Having no old preachers with us, we were as orphans bereft of our spiritual parents; but though young and inexperienced in business, the Lord looked graciously upon us, and had the uppermost seat in all our hearts, and of course in our meeting. As the consideration of

[38] Lee, p. 64. [39] Garrettson's Life, p. 111.

the administration of the ordinances was laid over, at the last Conference, till this, it of course came up and found many advocates. It was with considerable difficulty that a large majority was prevailed on to lay it over again till the next Conference, hoping that we should, by that time, be able to see our way more clear in so important a change."

The sacramental question was now, in fine, irrepressible; the clergy of the Church of England, upon whom the Methodists were mostly dependent for their baptism and the eucharist, had nearly all fled the country. The scriptural right of the young Church to these ordinances was unquestionable among themselves; expediency alone seemed to interfere. The controversy will soon culminate, amid general alarm and no little peril, but it will finally prove itself to have been one of the most providential events of the incipient history of the denomination, the provocation and reason of its effective and permanent organization. Besides this controversy we have intimations of no other business, done at the session, except the appointment of two "general stewards" to receive and distribute its collections, and, owing to the depreciation of the paper currency, the increase of the preachers' allowance from six to eight pounds, per quarter, Virginia money.

About half the probationers, received at this time, traveled but two or three years. Some of the others became more or less distinguished in the Church. One of them, James O'Kelly, will hereafter appear in an unfortunate contest with the denomination; in these early times, however, he was highly esteemed for his talents and his fervent devotion. Asbury first met him, two years after the present Conference, and described him as "a warm-hearted, good man," and "very affecting" in his preach-

ing. He adds that they "enjoyed and comforted each other; this dear man rose at midnight and prayed very devoutly for me and himself." O'Kelly was one of the most laborious and popular evangelists of that day, and occupied important appointments, as Circuit Preacher, Presiding Elder, Member of the "Council" of 1789, and also of the first General Conference, 1792, soon after which he withdrew from the Church to organize the "Republican Methodists." In the fifteen years, during which he continued in the denomination, he labored successfully in North Carolina and Virginia; about half these years he traveled large districts as presiding elder,[40] and wielded a commanding influence over the preachers of the South.

It is an example of the capriciousness of fortune or fame, that while the name of James O'Kelly is familiar in Methodist history, that of Richard Ivey, an incomparably more deserving man, is hardly remembered. "As a Methodist preacher he was known from Jersey to Georgia. He possessed quick and solid parts; was a holy, self-denying Christian, that lived to be useful. Much of the eighteen years that he was in the work he acted as an elder at the head of a district. He located in 1794 to take care of his aged mother, and died in peace in 1795."[41] His unrecorded services contributed greatly to the early outspread of the Church. He was one of its original elders, and one of its most eloquent preachers. Thomas Ware, to whom we are indebted for some of our most interesting reminiscences of these obscure times, speaks of him in emphatic words. Ware

[40] I have used the title "presiding" elder before it appears in the Minutes, as the office was substantially the same before and after the adoption of that title by the Conference.

[41] Lednum, p. 223.

heard him on a critical occasion in West Jersey. "Learning," he says, "that a company of soldiers, quartered near one of the appointments, had resolved to arrest the first preacher who should come there, and carry him to head-quarters, I determined to accompany him, hoping, as I was acquainted with some of the officers, to convince them that he was no enemy of his country. The preacher was Richard Ivey, who, at that time, was quite young. The rumor of what was about to be done having gone abroad, many of the most respectable inhabitants of the neighborhood were collected at the place. Soon after the congregation was convened a file of soldiers were marched into the yard, and halted near the door, and two officers came in, drew their swords, crossed them on the table, and seated themselves, one on each side of it, but so as to look the preacher full in the face. I watched his eye with great anxiety, and soon saw that he was not influenced by fear. His text was, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' When he came to enforce the exhortation, 'Fear not,' he paused, and said, 'Christians sometimes fear when there is no cause for fear;' and so, he added, he presumed it was with some then present. Those men who were engaged in the defense of their country's right meant them no harm. He spoke fluently and forcibly in commendation of the cause of freedom from foreign and domestic tyranny, looking at the same time first on the swords, and then in the faces of the officers, as if he would say, This looks a little too much like domestic oppression; and in conclusion, bowing to each of the officers, and opening his bosom, said, 'Sirs, I would fain show you my heart; if it beats not high for legitimate liberty may it forever cease to beat.' This he said with such a tone

of voice and with such a look as thrilled the whole audience, and gave him command of their feelings. The countenances of the officers at first wore a contemptu ous frown, then a significant smile, and then they were completely unarmed: they hung down their heads, and before the conclusion of this masterly address, shook like the leaves of an aspen. Many of the people sobbed aloud, and others cried out, Amen! while the soldiers without (the doors and windows being open) swung their hats, and shouted, 'Huzza for the Methodist parson!' On leaving, the officers shook hands with the preacher, and wished him well; and afterward said they would share their last shilling with him."

Though he had located, his brethren commemorated him in their Minutes of 1796. "He was a native," they say, "of Sussex County, Va. He traveled extensively through Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia: a man of quick and solid parts. He sought not himself any more than a Pedicord, a Gill, or a Tunnell, men well known to our connection, who never thought of growing rich by the Gospel; whose great concern was to be rich in grace and useful to souls. Thus Ivey, a man of affliction, lingered out his latter days, spending his all with his life in the work. Exclusive of his patrimony, he was indebted at his death. He died in his native county in Virginia in the latter part of 1795."

John Major was distinguished by his pathetic eloquence. He was known as the "Weeping Prophet." His usefulness is said to have been "seldom equaled." His congregations were usually melted, and his own voice lost in their sobs and cries. He was one of the earliest missionaries sent by the denomination to Georgia, where he was surpassingly popular, without as well as

within the Church. Through ten years of itinerant labors and sufferings he devoted his utmost energies to the founding of Methodism in the extreme South, and fell at last in his work near Augusta, Ga., in 1788, "dying a witness of perfect love." Of course such a man could not fail to be very useful. The most obdurate hearts dissolved under his appeals. Even at his grave a hardened sinner, reflecting on his devoted life, seemed to hear again, in mute echoes, his pathetic warnings, and was awakened and converted. The Conference recorded his obituary in a single but significant sentence: "John Major, a simple-hearted man; a living, loving soul, who died, as he lived, full of faith and the Holy Ghost; ten years in the work; useful and blameless."[42] One of his fellow-laborers describes him as "armed with the irresistible eloquence of tears:" as so beloved by the people that "they would have risked their lives to rescue him from insult or injury." "I have seen," he adds, "an audience sit quietly and listen to a masterly discourse without a tear to moisten the eye of an individual, and then Major, by an exhortation of five minutes, produce such an effect that all seemed to melt before him, so that there was scarcely a dry eye in the whole assembly. I once heard this good man, when the Methodists principally for forty miles around, and some for more than fifty, were collected at a quarterly meeting on the favored Peninsula. His text was, 'Unto you who believe he is precious.' Before he closed his pathetic discourse, his voice was lost in the cries of the people; and at the close of the meeting we had occasion to rejoice over many sons and daughters redeemed by power as well as by price."[43]

[42] Minutes, 1778. Lednum, p. 224. Major's name is not among the candidates of this year, but is in the list of appointments. The old Minutes, I repeat, are full of errata.

[43] Ware, p. 175.

Henry Willis is another, now obscure, but once pre-eminent name, that history should not willingly let die. He was born on the old Brunswick Circuit, Va., and was the first man that Asbury ordained deacon and elder after the Christmas Conference.[44] His brethren, mourning his death, say, in their Minutes, "that he was a man of very improved mind;" that "with him system, spirit, and practice were all united."[45] After years of apostolic labors his lungs failed, but he had such an estimate of the ministerial vocation, that he deemed it his duty never to abandon his post till death should cancel his commission. Repeatedly did he temporarily locate to regain his health, but as repeatedly did he resume his work as he had strength. "Possibly," say the Minutes, "not many such cases as that of Henry Willis have been known. He lingered along the shores of death, apparently dying, and then reviving and rereviving for years, but finally the feeble taper sunk quietly in the socket and disappeared. He died with an unshaken confidence in his God, and triumphant faith in Christ Jesus as his Saviour. Perhaps the real worth of a Willis, and many others of the primitive Methodist preachers in America, will never be known till the great day of universal judgment." They describe him as having "an open, pleasant, smiling countenance; great fortitude, great courage tempered with good conduct; as "cheerful, without levity, and sober, without sadness." They speak of him as a great man of God, who extended his labors from New York, in the North, to Charleston, in the South, and to the Western waters. In these stations the name of Willis will be held in venerable remembrance. We shall meet him again, as the first Methodist preacher stationed in Charleston, and one of the first who pioneered Method-

[44] Lednum, p. 224. [45] Minutes, 1808.

ism across the Alleghanies. After thirty years of ministerial sufferings and labors he died in 1808 at Pipe Creek, Md., the scene of Strawbridge's first labors. Asbury esteemed no Methodist preacher higher than Henry Willis. On visiting his grave he exclaimed, "Henry Willis! Ah, when shall I look upon thy like again! Rest, man of God!"

It was at this Conference that Philip Gatch ceased to itinerate, on account of his health, enfeebled by excessive labors. Though he soon afterward married and settled on a farm, he had the superintendence of some of the circuits in the neighborhood of his residence, in Powhattan County, Va., and preached continually. In the sacramental controversy, which produced a temporary rupture the next year, he was one of the committee of three (including Reuben Ellis and John Dickins) who had charge of "the southern part of the work." Though no longer on the Conference records, his services were hardly diminished, and the Church owes to him one of its most momentous legislative measures: the trial of accused members by committees, in place of the previous clerical power of excommunication.

It has been remarked that at least four of the men who entered "the itinerancy, this year, were preachers of note. John Major was universally beloved and useful, remarkable for tenderness and tears. Richard Ivey stood high as a Christian and as a preacher. Henry Willis was unequaled, in the judgment of high authority. James O'Kelly was a warm Southern man, and a warm, zealous preacher, who acquired great influence; he did much good while he continued in the ranks with Asbury."[46]

Nearly half a century after our present period, Freeborn Garrettson, then a patriarch of fifty years' minis-

[46] Lednum, p. 226.

terial service, commemorated, before the New York Conference, some of the men noticed in this chapter. Of John Dickins he said: "He was a wise and good man, and a great preacher. He commenced our Book Concern by printing a small Hymn Book, principally with his own funds. Before his death it acquired a considerable degree of magnitude. He compiled that most excellent Scripture Catechism which has been used so long in our Church. His piety was ardent, his reproofs pointed, and he strictly enforced our discipline; but he was more rigid toward himself than toward others." Of Tunnell he said, that "he was a man of slender habit, who, early in life, wore himself out in the work of God, and went home to glory. He was a preacher much beloved and greatly blessed. A sweet singer in Israel, he had a soft, clear voice; and his demeanor was humble, meek, and gentle. He was a son of consolation and of affliction." Of Henry Willis he said, that "he was a light in the Church for many years. At a very early period in the work I met him in Virginia, took him by the hand, and thought he would be a blessing to the Church; and so he proved. His habit was slender, though he traveled many years; but want of health at length induced him to take a supernumerary station. His zeal and love for the cause continued to the day of his death, and rendered him exceedingly useful in his neighborhood. What I have said of him would be also descriptive of my brother, Richard Garrettson, who entered the ministry about the same time. They have gone as ripe grain to the garner of the Lord. William Gill was a man of a remarkably strong mind, and though called from an humble situation in life, before he had traveled eight years he might be accounted a learned man, so greatly had he improved himself in theology

and philosophy. He was powerful in prayer, his petitions seeming to wing their way to heaven. His sermons were deep and scriptural. He paid very little attention to dress, and was diminutive in appearance; but his good sense, usefulness, and piety commanded respect; and he displayed so much wisdom, and such a profusion of excellent matter in his discourses, as greatly surprised those who had judged of him only from personal appearance. Caleb B. Pedicord was instrumental in bringing many souls to God; he was constitutionally subject to dejection, which sometimes led him to doubt his call to preach, and induced him to think of returning home. I remember a speech he made in a Love-feast, (during the sitting of the Conference at Baltimore,) which moved the whole assembly. He rose up, bathed in tears, and said: 'My friends, I have labored under heavy trials the past year. I was afraid that I was doing no good, and that I was not called to preach; but shortly before I left my circuit I went to a house where I met an aged negro woman, who told me that what I had said to her, when I was there on a former occasion, had been the means of awakening her, and of bringing her to God. "I bless the Lord," said she, "that ever I saw you; for I am now happy in God my Saviour!" O how greatly did this encourage me! for I thought it was better to gain one soul to Christ than to acquire all the riches of the world. And now I am encouraged to go forward in the good work; and, God being my helper, I will spend the remainder of my days wholly in his service!' After this he served the Church several years, and then went home to glory. Shall I mention a Ruff, a Watters, a Boyer, a Baxter, a Mair, an Ellis, a Bruce, a Poythress, a Tatum, a Hartley, etc. These were early in the field of labor; and although I

had the honor of entering it a little before them, they have been gathered home long before me. In the midst of war, commotion, and persecution, we had great peace and prosperity in the Church; and we thought not our lives dear unto us if we could accomplish the great work of spreading the Gospel through every part of the continent; and, blessed be God! he was with us, and his word had free course and was glorified. The Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and some parts of New York, shared in the blessed work; for while we were traversing the wilds of our afflicted country, mingling our tears with the Gospel word, thousands were brought to taste the sweets of religion."[47]

Such were some of the great men who laid our ecclesiastical foundations; oblivion has been fast gathering over their graves and their names; the historians of the Church may well attempt to replace them in its grateful recognition, though it be by the scantiest reminiscences.

[47] Garrettson's Semi-centennial Sermon.

CHAPTER VII.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH —CONTINUED.

The Two Conferences of 1779 — The Sacramental Controversy followed by a temporary Rupture — The Right of the Question — Vindication of the Sacramental Party — John Haggerty — Nelson Reed — Philip Cox — He calls out Bishops M'Kendree and George — Scenes in his Ministry — Conference of 1780 — Conclusion of the Sacramental Controversy — William Partridge — James O. Cromwell — Thomas Foster — Caleb Boyer — George Mair — Scenes in a Love-Feast — Ignatius Pigman — Reminiscences.

Two Conferences were held in the year 1779. The first was at the house of Judge White, Kent County, Del., on the 28th of April, to accommodate Asbury (who was there confined) and the preachers east of the Potomac; the second at Fluvanna, Va.,[1] on the 18th of May. Though their records are distinct in the Minutes, they have been deemed one Conference. The sacramental controversy was still rife among the preachers in Virginia, and Asbury doubtless hoped, by the more northern, anticipatory session, to forestall its threatened issues. He writes in his asylum, "All our preachers on these stations were present and united. We had much prayer, love, and harmony, and all agreed to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing. As we had great reason to fear that our brethren, to the southward, were in danger of separating from us, we wrote them a soft, healing epistle. On these northern stations we have now about

[1] At what is well known in the history of the Church as the "Brockenback Chapel."

seventeen traveling preachers." Watters, Garrettson, Pedicord, Gill, Ruff, and about ten others, were present, besides Asbury. At this session was inserted in the Minutes, for the first time, the question, "Who desist from traveling?" locations having not heretofore been noticed. Robert Cloud and William Duke are the first names thus recorded. Sixteen preachers, probably the whole number present, including Asbury and Watters, pledged themselves "to take the station this Conference shall place them in, and continue till the next Conference;" implying, it would seem, an apprehension that the regular session at Fluvanna might dissent from the proceedings at Kent. It was ordained that exhorters and local preachers should "go only where" the assistants should appoint, and that no "helper" should make any change in his circuit, or appoint any new preaching place "without consulting the assistant." Preachers were ordered to meet the classes, at all their appointments if possible, and to meet the children once a fortnight, and counsel parents "with regard to their conduct toward them." The term of ministerial probation was changed from one year to two. Anticipating, probably, the proceedings at Fluvanna, the question was asked, "Shall we guard against a separation from the Church direct or indirect?" and answered, "By all means." Asbury was recognized as "General Assistant in America" for the reasons of his "age," his former service in that function by Wesley's appointment, and his "being joined with Messrs. Rankin and Shadford by express order from Mr. Wesley." This last reason, however, is ambiguous; Rankin and Shadford were sent out when Asbury was general assistant. Shadford was not appointed co-general assistant; but Rankin was appointed to supersede Asbury in the office, and the latter was actually ordered to

England, as has been shown. During the administration of Rankin, Asbury was entirely subordinate to his authority, and sometimes grievously humiliated by it. Rankin presided at all the Annual Conferences, and made out all the appointments, sometimes appointing Asbury to circuits directly against his will. Asbury had never yet presided in an Annual Conference recorded in the Minutes. His new authority was defined, and was remarkable. "On hearing every preacher for and against what is in debate, the right of determination shall rest with him, according to the Minutes;" that is, according to the usage of Wesley, as seen in the British Minutes, these being the only Minutes yet extant. The American Minutes were not published till 1795.[2]

The statistics of the year are given only in the Minutes of the Fluvanna session. Eleven preachers were reported on trial; Pedicord was the only probationer received into full membership. The whole number of traveling preachers was forty-four,[3] a gain of fourteen. The circuits numbered twenty,[4] a gain of five; Philadelphia, Chester, and Frederick, omitted last year, reappear. The returns of members amounted to 8,577, the increase to 2,482. The success of the year had been unexpectedly great, considering the tumults of the period. Lee says that "in some places the work of the Lord spread rapidly, and bore down all before it. But in many places the Societies were thrown into great disorder and confusion, by reason of the war which continued to rage through the land. Many of the men were drafted and taken into the army, and many people left their homes to

[2] Lee, p. 89.

[3] The Minutes say forty-nine, but repeat those on Baltimore and Frederick Circuits.

[4] The Minutes give nineteen; but by uniting Philadelphia and New Jersey.

keep out of the way of the enemy, and to save their property by carrying it with them." The successful places were south of Delaware. North of Maryland there were reported but 1,114 members; but Maryland returned 1,900, Virginia nearly 3,800, and North Carolina about 1,500.

Such are the few traces of those sessions, found in the official records; but we have, from the manuscript Journal of Gatch, the leader of the Fluvanna session, a fuller view of the sacramental controversy; the great fact in its proceedings, though entirely omitted in its published Minutes. This momentous question had been broached in the first American Conference, 1773. At the session of 1777 it was not dismissed, but only postponed to the ensuing session; at the latter it was again postponed to the session of 1779.[5] The Fluvanna Conference being the "regularly appointed" session of this year, had the question therefore legitimately before it—referred directly to it by the preceding session. As a further reason for determining the controversy, they said "the Episcopal establishment is now dissolved in this country; and, therefore, in almost all our circuits the members are without the ordinances." They appointed "a committee"—Gatch, Foster, Cole, and Ellis—and constituted it "a Presbytery:" "first, to administer the ordinances themselves; second, to authorize any other preacher or preachers, approved by them, by the form of laying on of hands." They asked, "What is to be observed as touching the administration of the ordinances, and to whom shall they be administered?" And answered, "To those who are under our care and discipline." "Shall we rebaptize any under our care?" "No." "What mode shall we adopt for the administration of

[5] Gatch's Life, p. 67.

baptism?" "Either sprinkling or plunging, as the parents or adults may choose." "What ceremony shall be used in the administration?" "Let it be according to our Lord's commandment—Matt. xxviii, 19—short and extempore." "Shall the sign of the cross be used?" "No." "Who shall receive the charge of the child after baptism for its future instruction?" "The parent or person having the care of the child, with advice from the preacher." "What mode shall be adopted for the administration of the Lord's supper?" "Kneeling is thought the most proper, but, in case of conscience, may be left to the choice of the communicant." "What ceremony shall be observed in this ordinance?" "After singing, prayer, and exhortation, the preacher shall deliver the bread, saying, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc., after the Church order."

The committee, or presbytery, ordained one another, and afterward such of the preachers present "as were desirous of receiving ordination."

Such were the proceedings of the Conference on this important question. They were not only legitimate, but harmonious. Watters, who was present as the messenger of the Kent Conference, says: "After much loving talk on the subject, all but a few determined on appointing a committee to ordain each other, and then all the rest."

Lee calls the Kent session "a preparatory Conference;" Garrettson calls it "a little Conference," "called by the Northern brethren" for their "convenience." Watters received "no notice" of it, but, hearing of it indirectly, "determined if possible" to get there, "though in a very weak state of health," in order that he might persuade "Asbury to attend the *regularly appointed* Conference, to be held on the 18th of May, 1779, in Flu-

vanna County."[6] Garrettson again says: "In May, 1779, the *regular Conference* was held, *according to appointment*, in the Brockenback Church, Fluvanna County, Virginia. The question 'Shall we administer the ordinances?' was again agitated, and was answered in the affirmative. Some of the oldest preachers were therefore set apart to administer the sacraments. The troubles were such that we of the North did not attend."[7] These testimonies are decisive of the question, which of the sessions was the "regularly appointed one." The Kent session was not only an informal one, called after the "regular Conference" had been appointed, but was probably unknown to the Southern preachers till after its adjournment. If "no notice had been sent" to Watters, it is supposable that none was sent to any other preacher south or west of the Potomac. At the Kent Conference there were probably not more than sixteen preachers present;[8] at Fluvanna there must have been a decided majority, for we have the recorded vote of at least eighteen in the affirmative of the sacramental question, including some of the strongest men of the itinerancy, besides whatever number there may have been in the negative.[9] Asbury admits that there were but about seventeen preachers in the appointments represented at the Kent session, and the Minutes show that there were but about seven circuits. There were twice as many circuits represented at Fluvanna,[10] and nearly twice as many preachers appointed to them. Exclusive of the men sent to

[6] Watters's Life, p. 72. The italics are my own.

[7] Garrettson's Semi-centennial Sermon.

[8] Lednum, p. 228.

[9] Besides Watters, the only member who attended both sessions, "there were," he says, "a few who did not agree" with the affirmative.

[10] Baltimore and Frederick were recognized by both.

Baltimore and Frederick, (circuits in the lists of both sessions,) there were at least twenty-seven preachers appointed by the Fluvanna Conference.

Any student of Methodist history must dissent with diffidence from the judgment of so high an authority as Dr. Nathan Bangs. That historian says that, "Although the Kent Conference was considered as 'a preparatory Conference,' yet, if we take into consideration that the one, afterward held in Virginia, was held in the absence of the General Assistant, we shall see good reason for allowing that this, which was held under the presidency of Mr. Asbury, was the *regular* Conference, and hence their acts and doings are to be considered valid."[11] The historical evidence is, however, decisively to the contrary. Wesley had superseded Asbury, in the office of "General Assistant," by the appointment of Rankin. Rankin, as has been shown, had held that office and presided in every Annual Conference down to the preceding session. At the latter Asbury was not present; he was in retirement at Judge White's house; and as he received no appointment, his name is not even mentioned, in any way whatever, in the Minutes for the year; Watters presided, and the Conference appointed its next session to be held at Fluvanna. The session at Fluvanna was, therefore, as Watters calls it, the "regularly appointed Conference." The original historian of the Church records it as "the seventh Conference," merely alluding to that of Kent as "a preparatory Conference."[12] Instead of Asbury being the General Assistant at this time, that office had been, as we have noticed, put in commission at the Conference of 1777, being vested in a committee of five, Gatch, Dromgoole, Glendenning, Ruff,[13] and Watters, in view of the

[11] Bangs, i, p. 128. The italics are his own. [12] Lee, p. 67.
[13] Wrongly named Rufford in Gatch's Memoir, p. 59.

probable return of Rankin to England. All these commissioners, except Ruff, were within the territory of the Fluvanna Conference; one of them, Gatch, presided at its session, and was the champion of its proposed reforms. Asbury was designated to the office of General Assistant by the informal Conference in Kent; he had, therefore, no previous official authority to call that Conference, nor could his new appointment be considered legal till the majority of his brethren, who were within the Fluvanna Conference, should confirm it. Not till five years later did Asbury receive any such appointment from Wesley.[14] If, then, the question of legality is at all relevant, the Fluvanna session was clearly the legal, as well as "the regularly appointed" Conference of this year. The Kent Conference seemed indeed conscious of the necessity of acknowledging this fact, for, in the usual method of proceeding, by question and answer, they say, "Why was the Delaware Conference held?" And answer: "For the convenience of the preachers in the northern stations, that we all might have an opportunity of meeting in Conference; it being advisable for Brother Asbury and Brother Ruff, with some others, to attend in Virginia. It is considered also as preparatory for the Conference in Virginia; our sentiments to be given in by Brother Watters."

The Fluvanna Conference not only included a majority of the preachers and circuits, but comprised, in the list of its appointments, a very preponderating majority of the membership of the Church. Exclusively of the nearly fourteen hundred of the Baltimore and Frederick Circuits, (recorded in the appointments of both sessions,) or rather assigning these to the Kent Conference, the membership territorially pertaining to the Fluvanna

[14] Asbury's Journals, *anno* 1784.

Conference amounted to nearly two thirds of the denomination.

Lee impartially records the facts of the controversy, though he evidently sympathizes with the Fluvanna brethren. In the course of this year he says they "concluded that, if God had called them to preach the Gospel, he had called them also to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. They chose a committee for the purpose of ordaining ministers. The preachers ordained went forth preaching the Gospel in their circuits as formerly, and administered the sacraments wherever they went, provided the people were willing to partake with them. Most of our preachers in the South fell in with this new plan; and as the leaders of the party were very zealous, and the greater part of them very pious men, the private members were influenced by them and pretty generally fell in with their measures; however, some of the old Methodists would not commune with them, but steadily adhered to their old customs. The preachers north of Virginia were opposed to this step, so hastily taken by their brethren in the South, and made a stand against it, believing that unless a stop could be put to this new mode of proceeding a separation would take place among the preachers and the people. There was great cause to fear a division, and both parties trembled for the ark of God, and shuddered at the thought of dividing the Church of Christ. The preachers in the South were very successful in their ministerial labors, and many souls were brought to God in the latter part of the year. These things all united to confirm them in the belief that the step they had taken was honored of God. And at that time there was very little room to hope that they would ever recede from their new plan, in which they were so well established.

But, after all, they consented, for the sake of peace and the union of the body of Methodists, to drop the ordinances, for a season, till Mr. Wesley could be consulted." [15]

As to the merits of the question in debate between the two parties, for parties they now were, few modern Methodists will hesitate to accord the claim of the Fluvanna brethren as right, if not as expedient. Strawbridge, the founder of the Church in the central colonies, had strenuously contended for this right, as we have seen, during some years. The recent revolutionary events of the country seemed now to justify it more than ever; but the foreign preachers had thus far successfully resisted it. The denomination was rapidly extending; its thousands of members, its tens of thousands of hearers, had, for years, been almost destitute of the Sacraments, by the flight of the English clergy, especially in the central and southern colonies, where the denomination was having its chief sway. Methodists, with Wesley, deemed the "apostolic succession" a "fable," and therefore not essential to the validity of these means of grace. In the yet uncertain prospects of the Revolutionary War, any hope of early relief from England could be but precarious. They had the right to provide the divinely enjoined ordinances of religion for themselves and their children, and they proceeded to do so by orderly and solemn forms. If, at Fluvanna, they were revolters, seceders, then it must be acknowledged that American Methodism, as a whole, must bear this reproach, for the proceedings of that session not only represented a majority of the circuits, preachers, and people, but were enacted in the legal assembly of the Church for the year, and by a legal majority of its recognized legislators. Nor can we accuse them of impatience. For at

[15] Lee, p. 69.

least six years the question had been pending, and they conceding to their opponents. Happily the difficulty was compromised, and the sacramental party, proving their moderation by prudent delay, accomplished their purpose more effectively, by pursuing it more peacefully, and achieved at last the most auspicious event of our history, the independent and Episcopal organization of American Methodism. But assuredly these are not reasons why such faithful men, including Philip Gatch, John Dickens, Nelson Reed, Reuben Ellis, John Major, Henry Willis, Francis Poythress, and others as eminent, should be represented, however indirectly, as they have hitherto been by some of our authorities, as, practically, revolters from and disturbers of the Church. They were, as we have seen, in every legal sense the Church itself. Historical impartiality requires this vindication of their memory. It is requisite not only for their memory, but also, as will hereafter be seen, for the rectification of a grave defect in the official records of the denomination.[16]

Most of the preachers who entered the itinerancy at these two sessions retired after a few years. Some, however, became known as important laborers. John Haggerty, born in Prince George County, Md., in 1747,[17] was a convert of the ministry of John King about 1771. In 1772 King lodged at his house, preached in the market-place, and formed a class, consisting of Haggerty and thirteen others. He began to preach, among his neighbors, the same year, and continued to labor diligently for the Church, under the direction of Strawbridge, Rankin, and King, till he entered the regular itinerancy in the

[16] For the justificatory evidence of the views here given, see Judge M'Lean's Life of Gatch, and Dr. Lee's Life and Times of Jesse Lee.

[17] Sketch of Haggerty by Bishop Soule, Meth. Mag., 1824.

present year. He preached in both English and German. He was instrumental of the conversion of not a few men of ability, who became ornaments of the ministry. His appointments extended from Annapolis to New York. At the close of 1792 he was compelled to locate by the sickness of his wife. He settled in Baltimore, where he "continued to preach with great acceptability. Few men were more cordially disposed to serve the Church. At any hour, night or day, he was at the command of the people. Distance, weather, or season was no consideration with him when duty called. He was often known to rise from his bed at midnight and ride, for miles, into the country, to visit the sick or dying, without fee or reward. He was one of the original elders of the Church, and died in the faith in 1823, aged seventy-six years. "We called," writes Bishop Soule, "to see him on the preceding Sunday, and found him in a very comfortable frame of mind. Upon remarking to him that he appeared to be drawing nigh to eternity, he replied, 'Yes, and all is straight; the way is clear before me.' In the afternoon we called again, and prayed with him. He now appeared to have heaven in full anticipation. His eyes sparkled, and his whole theme was thanksgiving and praise. On Thursday evening, September 4th, he breathed his last without a struggle or a groan." He was of commanding person, robust, erect, energetic, with prominent features, and a noble, intellectual forehead; in all respects a worthy representative of the original ministry of American Methodism.

Nelson Reed was born in Anne Arundel County, Md., in 1751, and converted, under the ministry of William Watters, in 1775. He began his labors as a local preacher the same year, and continued them with ardor and success, till admitted, in 1779, to the itinerant

ranks. He assisted at the organization of the Church in 1784, and was one of its first elders. During forty-five years did this faithful evangelist serve in the traveling ministry, often occupying important positions, and always commanding the public veneration by his effective talents and his unblemished life. His whole ministerial course comprised sixty-five years. He died in 1840, at Baltimore, in the eighty-ninth year of his age, revered by the denomination as its most venerable patriarch, having attained the distinction of being the oldest Methodist preacher in the world. He was a man of transparent purity, solid talents, unswerving firmness, and rare symmetry of both mental and moral character. One of his personal friends, himself a veteran in the itinerancy, says: "There was no man to whom I would sooner go, as a counselor in time of difficulty, than to Nelson Reed. I can truly say that I have rarely known a brother toward whom my heart has been more strongly attracted; and now, after he has been resting for many years in his grave, his many admirable qualities come up before me in most grateful remembrance, and his very name touches one of the tenderest chords in my heart. He was of low stature, not more than five feet eight or nine inches high, strongly built, and uncommonly lithe and active in all his movements; a decidedly fine looking man. His mind was of a very marked cast, possessing at once great force and great compass. His perceptions were quick and clear, his judgment discriminating, and his ability to arrange and combine with the best effect very uncommon. While he could not be charged with anything like impulsiveness or impetuosity, he had a strength of conviction, a tenacity of purpose, that nothing could overawe, and that generally formed a perfect security for the accomplishment of his ends. He moved

forward like a pillar of light and of strength, until, by fair, well-considered, and honorable means, you saw that he had attained the object at which he was aiming. I hardly need say that these qualities gave him a pre-eminence in the General Conference, as well as in all the other councils of the Church. Nelson Reed commanded great attention as a preacher. He had a strong, round, full but not very melodious voice; and I presume he never found himself in any audience where it was not easy for him to make himself heard to the extreme limit. His sermons were generally argumentative, and thoroughly wrought, and seemed to require not much of passion in the delivery. He was deeply versed in the science of theology, having given to it a large amount of study, and from his rich stores of biblical and theological knowledge he drew largely in every sermon that he preached. He used to be called by a homely nickname, which, however, in that part of the country indicated the high esti mation in which he was held; it was nothing more nor less than the 'bacon and cabbage preacher,' by which it was intended to be understood that his preaching was of the most substantial and nourishing character. I remember to have heard of an incident in the earlier history of Mr. Reed, I think it was in the year 1796, that may serve to illustrate his remarkable fearlessness and energy. It occurred in the Conference which was then holding its session in Baltimore. Dr. Coke, one of the superintendents of the Church, was present; and one of the striking features of his character was that he was impatient of contradiction, and not wholly insensible to his own personal importance. He had on this occasion introduced some proposition in the General Conference, which seemed to some of the preachers a little dictatorial; and one of them, an Irishman, by the name of

Mathews, who had been converted in his native country from Romanism, and had fled to this country from an apprehension that his life was in danger at home, sprang to his feet, and cried out, 'Popery, Popery, Popery!' Dr. Coke rebuked the impulsive rudeness of Mathews, when he replied in his Irish manner, 'Och,' and sat down. While the Conference was now in a state of great suspense and agitation, Dr. Coke seized the paper containing his own resolution, and, tearing it up, not in the most moderate manner, looked round upon the preachers, and said, 'Do you think yourselves equal to me?' Nelson Reed instantly rose, and turning to Bishop Asbury, who was also present, said, 'Dr. Coke has asked whether we think ourselves equal to him; I answer, yes, we do think ourselves equal to him, notwithstanding he was educated at Oxford, and has been honored with the degree of Doctor of Laws; and more than that, we think ourselves equal to Dr. Coke's king.' The doctor now rose, with his passion entirely cooled off, and said, very blandly, 'He is hard upon me.' Bishop Asbury replied, 'I told you that our preachers are not blockheads.' The doctor then asked pardon of the Conference for his abrupt and impulsive demonstration, and thus the matter ended."[18]

Philip Cox, an Englishman, was one of the itinerant heroes of his day, preaching with power from Long Island to Western Virginia. He became a Methodist in 1774, and, in 1777, began to travel under Rodda. He was one of the earliest Methodist preachers in Sussex County, Del. In 1778 Asbury sent him to Kent Circuit. "When he first began to travel he was unable to procure a horse; his poverty obliged him to be a pedestrian itin-

[18] Rev. Alfred Griffith, in Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. vii, p. 69.

erant, carrying his scanty wardrobe and library in a linen wallet swung across his shoulder; thus, with staff in hand, he proclaimed the message of salvation. Pitying his destitution, the daughters of Judge White spun thread and wove it into garments for him. After a while, through the kindness and contributions of his friends, he was able to travel as an equestrian."[19] Bishop M'Kendree began his itinerant labors under Cox, on Mecklenburg Circuit, Va., and the zealous Englishman had the honor also of calling out Bishop George. Cox was "traveling book steward" at this time; he found young George on his route, and taking him to Asbury, then bishop, said, "I have brought you a boy, and if you have anything for him to do you may set him to work." Asbury looked at the youth for some time, and then calling him nearer, and laying his head upon his knee, stroked it with his hand, and said, "Why, he is a beardless boy, and can do nothing." George then thought his traveling was at an end; but the next day the bishop accepted his services, and appointed him to a circuit.[20]

Though a remarkably small man, weighing only about a hundred pounds, Cox was full of moral and mental force. He remained single till he was fifty years old, that he might pursue unembarrassed his favorite evangelical travels; and, after his marriage, continued, contrary to the custom of that day, to itinerate till he fell heroically by death. In 1787, while laboring on Sussex Circuit, Va., his energy stirred the whole region, and was attended with one of the greatest "revivals" of those times. He had accidentally injured a limb, and designed to repair it by taking a season of rest; but he was called to attend the funeral of a child. A hundred persons were present, to whom he preached, sitting upon a table,

[19] Lednum, p. 246. [20] Atkins's Memorials, p. 135.

from the words, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Half of his congregation were professors of religion; the other fifty professed to be converted before the conclusion of the meeting. The next day he sat preaching on a table or chair, in a forest, and sixty souls were converted. At a quarterly meeting on this circuit he writes: "Before the preachers got there the work broke out, so that when we came to the chapel above sixty were prostrate, groaning in loud cries to God for mercy. O'Kelly tried to preach, but could not be heard for the cries of the distressed. It is thought our audience consisted of no less than five thousand the first day, and the second day of twice that number. We preached to them in the open air, in the chapel, and in a barn at the same time. Such a sight my eyes never saw before, and never read of, either in Mr. Wesley's Journals, or any other writings, concerning the Lord's pouring out of his Spirit, except the account in Scripture of the day of Pentecost. Never, I believe, was the like seen since the apostolic age; hundreds were at once down on the ground in bitter cries to God for mercy. Here were many of the first quality in the country, with their silks and broadcloths, powdered heads, rings, and ruffles, and some of them so affected that they could neither speak nor stir; many stood by, persecuting, till the power of the Lord laid hold of them, and then they fell themselves. We are not able to give a just account how many were converted, and as we had rather be under than over the number, we believe that near two hundred whites and more than half as many blacks professed to find Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." In his Journal, January 8th, 1788, Asbury says, on the authority of Cox, "that not less than fourteen hundred,

white and black, have been converted in Sussex Circuit the past year."

Cox shared in the sufferings of his brethren. He was "taken up," says Asbury, "by a man of property, who lived about one year afterward, and languished out his life." "I do not," adds the bishop, "recollect one preacher who has been thus treated, that something distressing has not followed his persecutors." Remarkable and frequent coincidences of this kind led most Methodists of that age to agree in the opinion of Asbury.

The old Minutes commemorate the services and death of this brave man. They say he "had been in the ministry about sixteen years, and traveled extensively through several of the United States; that he was a man of small stature, but great spirit; having quick apprehension, a sound judgment, and a love of union; that he often prayed and preached, to the admiration of many; that he did great service in the circulation of books of religious instruction." After a western journey he was attacked with mortal disease. "He observed on Sunday, the first of September, 1793, that it was such a day of peace and comfort to his soul as he had seldom seen. On Sunday, the eighth, he departed in peace."[21]

It has been remarked that the just representation of the relations between the Kent and Fluvanna sessions of the Conference of 1779 is necessary for the rectification of a defect in the official records of the denomination. The year upon which we now enter, 1780, presents that defect. The Fluvanna session being, as has been shown, the "regularly appointed" Conference, legitimately adjourned from the preceding year, under the authoritatively appointed commissioners of superintendence, presided over by one of those commissioners, and comprising a majority

[21] Minutes, i, p. 54.

of the circuits, preachers, and people, was unquestionably the legal or rightful session of the body. The legitimate session for the next year must therefore be that to which the Fluvanna session adjourned. Its adjournment was to Manakintown, Powhattan County, Va., May 8th, 1780.[22] But the Minutes give none of the proceedings of this Conference; it is unmentioned in all our cotemporary official documents; the indirect indications of its session are so obscure that few Methodists are to-day aware that any such Conference was ever held. It did meet however, and, notwithstanding the efforts made, during the preceding year, to counteract the measures of the Fluvanna session, the session at Manakintown represented fully one half the circuits and nearly one half the preachers and membership of the denomination. Asbury, designated by the informal session in Kent to the office of General Assistant, called a Conference of the more northern preachers, at Baltimore, on the 24th of April, and thus anticipated the Manakintown session by two weeks. Garrettson justly says, "The next Conference was appointed to be held at Manakintown, Va., May, 1780. Prior to this Conference we northern preachers thought it expedient, for our own convenience, to hold one in Baltimore, at which Messrs. Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson were appointed, as delegates to the Virginia Conference, to bring them back if possible to our original usages. The proposition that we made to them was, that they should suspend the administration of the ordinances for one year; in the mean while we would consult Mr. Wesley; and in the following May we would have a union Conference in Baltimore, and abide by his judgment. To this proposal they unanimously agreed; and a letter, containing a circumstantial account of the case,

[22] Judge M'Lean's Life of Gatch, p. 75.

drawn up by Mr. Dickens, was sent to Mr. Wesley. In May, 1781, we met and received Mr. Wesley's answer, which was, that we should continue on the old plan until further direction. We unanimously agreed to follow his counsel, and went on harmoniously."[23] We have the proceedings only of the Baltimore session of 1780, except the list of appointments made at Manakintown, which, after the fortunate reconciliation of the parties, was inserted in the Minutes of the year, though apart from the list made at Baltimore.

This statement of the facts of the case is, I repeat, due to the integrity of history and to the memory of the Fluvanna brethren, who, as has been seen, were no schism or faction, but really, at the time of their session, the Church, represented in its legitimate conference. Their measures were equally legitimate; they were conducted with dignity and solemnity; and they were at last effectuated, to the signal advantage of American Methodism. If not at the moment expedient, though right, yet the question of expediency itself could be rightfully determined only by the majority in the regular Conference, and it was so determined. That these brethren yielded the question for the sake of peace and unity should not discredit them, but commend them to peculiar respect. Nor need either party be discredited for any apparent irregularity in its proceedings. Both were composed of the most devoted men the American Church has ever known; they were yet in the forming period of their history, without clearly defined ecclesiastical laws and were surrounded with the anarchy of a terrible war. In the general confusion, and their zealous solicitude to maintain, till better times, the integrity of their cause, they could have hardly escaped some errors. But, as we shall pres-

[23] Garrettson's Semi-centennial Sermon.

ently see, they quickly redeemed themselves, by a rare example of forbearance and a perfect restoration of harmony. Garrettson says: "I do not think that Drew, in his Life of Coke, has, in several particulars, done justice to our American brethren. He represents them as very refractory, and supposes that Asbury had much trouble with them; whereas the fact is, they went forth in the power of the Spirit, disseminating divine truth, and suffering much persecution and many privations; while Asbury had a quiet retreat at Judge White's, and that during the hottest time of our conflict. It is true, our southern brethren, to satisfy the people and their own consciences, did administer the ordinances in what they thought an extreme case. The leading members of the Fluvanna Conference were Dickens, Gatch, Yergain, Poythress, Ellis, Tatum, etc., all faithful, pious, zealous men of God, who would have done credit to any religious connection. I admired their goodness in cordially agreeing to consult Wesley, and to follow his judgment, and, till they should receive his advice, to suspend the administration of the ordinances. If I am prolix on this subject it is to show that our Virginia brethren were undeservedly accused of schism."[24]

With their cotemporary historian we "must consider the proceedings" of both sessions "together, as it respects the general work."[25]

The Baltimore session was held in the new church on Lovely Lane; Asbury, who now finally ventured out of his retirement, presided. The Minutes show twenty circuits; some old ones disappear, merged in new ones, of

[24] Semi-centennial Sermon. Dr. Lee (Life, etc., of Lee, chap. iii) has amply vindicated the Fluvanna preachers by original documents. See also Judge M'Lean's Life of Gatch, p. 62, *et seq.*

[25] Lee, p. 70.

which there are three: Sussex, Del., Dorset, Md., and Yadkin, N. C. There are forty-three traveling preachers, including Asbury,[26] a decrease of one. Five are recorded as received on trial,[27] and five "into full connection." The members returned are 8,504; showing a loss of seventy-three.

Important measures were adopted this year. All the preachers were required to change circuits semi-annually; to "make conscience" of rising at four, or, latest, at five o'clock in the morning; to have written licenses, signed by Asbury, certifying their connection with the Conference; the Local Preachers and Exhorters to have licenses renewable quarterly, and the circuit "assistants" to secure the settlement of all chapels by Trustees. It was "determined to continue in close connection with the Church, and to press the people to closer communion with her;" to "grant the privilege to all friendly clergy of the Church of England, at the desire of the people, to preach or administer the ordinances" in Methodist chapels; to allow the wives of itinerants an equivalent, with their husbands, in "the quarterage," if they should need it; to meet the colored people in class, and appoint white men to lead them; to "speak, if possible, with every person, one by one, where they lodged, before prayer, or give a family exhortation after reading a chapter;" to observe in the Societies quarterly fasts; to "disapprove the practice of distilling grain into liquor, and disown all who would not renounce it." Preachers holding slaves were required to "give promises to set them

[26] Lee says thirty-six—a mistake. Bangs makes out a decrease of seven; he did not notice that the appointments for Baltimore and Frederick Circuits were given twice in the preceding year.

[27] Lee says fourteen; Lednum eleven; the Minutes record none received at Manakintown. Lee and Lednum may have had unpublished information respecting this session.

free." It was declared that "this Conference acknowledges that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not that others should do to us and ours;" and that "we do pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom." Methodism thus early recorded its protest against negro slavery, anticipating its abolition in Massachusetts by three years,[28] in Rhode Island and Connecticut by four years; the thesis of Clarkson, before the University of Cambridge, by five years; and the ordinance of Congress against it, in the North-western Territory, by seven years.

Respecting the proceedings at Fluvanna, it was declared that "this whole Conference disapproves the step taken by the brethren in Virginia;" that "we look upon them no longer as Methodists, in connection with Mr. Wesley and us, till they come back;" and Asbury, Watters, and Garrettson were appointed to "attend the Virginia Conference, to inform them of their proceedings, and receive their answer." The "conditions of union with the Virginia brethren" were, that the latter should "suspend all their administrations, and all meet together in Baltimore the next year."

These measures were witnessed by two of the Fluvanna preachers, Gatch and Ellis, who were at Baltimore "to see if anything could be done to prevent a total disunion, for they did not wish that to be the case," says Watters, who, throughout this perilous controversy, acted generously and wisely as a conciliator. Being one of the delegates from the Baltimore session to that of

[28] It ceased in Massachusetts by a decision of the Supreme Court, founded upon "The Bill of Rights."

Manakintown, he has left us the best account of their momentous mission and its happy results. He says that Gatch and Ellis "both thought their Baltimore brethren were hard with them, and there was little appearance of anything but an entire separation. They complained that I was the only one, who did not join them, that treated them with affection and tenderness. I awfully feared our visit would be of little consequence, yet I willingly went down in the name of God, hoping against hope. We found our brethren as loving and as full of zeal as ever, and as determined on persevering in their newly-adopted mode; for to all their former arguments they now added (what with many was infinitely stronger than all other arguments in the world) that the Lord approbated and greatly blessed his own ordinances, by them administered the past year. We had a great deal of loving conversation, with many tears; but I saw no bitterness, no shyness, no judging each other. We wept and prayed and sobbed, but neither would agree to the other's terms. In the mean time I was requested to preach at twelve o'clock. As I had many preachers and professors to hear me, I spoke from the words of Moses to his father-in-law: 'We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.' After waiting two days, and all hopes of an accommodation failing, we had fixed on starting back early in the morning; but late in the evening it was proposed by one of their own party in Conference (none of the others being present) that there should be a suspension of the ordinances for the present year, and that our circumstances should be laid before Mr. Wesley, and his advice solicited; also that Mr. Asbury should be requested to ride through

the different circuits, and superintend the work at large. The proposal, in a few minutes, took with all but a few. In the morning, instead of coming off in despair, we were invited to take our seats again in the Conference, where, with great rejoicings and praises to God, we, on both sides, heartily agreed to the accommodation. I could not but say it is of the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. I knew of nothing upon earth that could have given me more real consolation; and I could not but be heartily thankful for the stand I had taken, and the part I had acted through the whole contest. I had, by several leading characters on both sides, been suspected of leaning to the opposite; could all have agreed to the administration of the ordinances, I should have had no objection; but until that was the case, I could not think ourselves ripe for so great a change. We have had every reason to believe that everything would end well; that the evils which had actually attended our partial division would make us more cautious how we should entertain one thought of taking a step that might have the least tendency to so great an evil."[29]

Asbury has left a brief record of the memorable scene. On his way to Manakintown he found "the people full of the ordinances," for the question had become a popular one. On arriving there he was saddened to perceive the "inflexible" spirit of the preachers, who were led by the commanding minds of Gatch, Dickens, and O'Kelly. On Tuesday, 9th of May, he writes: "The Conference was called. Brothers Watters, Garrettson, and myself stood back, and being afteward joined by Brother Dromgoole, we were desired to come in, and I was permitted to speak. I read Mr. Wesley's thoughts against a separa-

[29] Watters's Life, p. 79.

tion; showed my private letters of instructions from Mr. Wesley; set before them the sentiments of the Delaware and Baltimore Conferences; read our epistles, and read my letter to Gatch, and Dickens's letter in answer. After some time spent this way, it was proposed to me, if I would get the circuits supplied, they would desist; but that I could not do. We went to preaching. I spoke on Ruth ii, 4, and spoke as though nothing had been the matter among the preachers or people, and we were greatly pleased and comforted; there was some moving among the people. In the afternoon we met; the preachers appeared to me to be further off; there had been, I thought, some talking out of doors. When we, Asbury, Garrettson, Watters, and Dromgoole, could not come to a conclusion with them, we withdrew, and left them to deliberate on the condition I offered, which was to suspend the measures they had taken for one year. After an hour's conference we were called to receive their answer, which was, that they could not submit to the terms of union. I then prepared to leave the house, to go to a near neighbor's to lodge, under the heaviest cloud I ever felt in America. O what I felt! nor I alone, but the agents on both sides. They wept like children, but kept their opinions. Wednesday, 10th, I returned to take leave of the Conference, and to go off immediately to the North; but found they had been brought to an agreement while I was praying, as with a broken heart, in the house we went to lodge at; and Brothers Watters and Garrettson had been praying up stairs, where the Conference sat. We heard what they had to say—surely the hand of God has been greatly seen in all this. There might have been twenty promising preachers and three thousand people seriously affected by this separation, but the Lord would not suffer this.

We then had preaching by Brother Watters, afterward we had a love-feast. Preachers and people wept, prayed, and talked."[30]

"We set our faces toward the North," says Garrettson, "with gladness of heart, praising the Lord for his great goodness."[31] Thus did the little bark, freighted with so much of the future welfare of the nation, and of Protestant Christendom, pass the threatening breakers and spread its sails, unrent, to those auspicious breezes, which, with the return of national peace, were soon to waft it on its career of unparalleled prosperity.

Few of the preachers who began their ministerial travels this year continued long in the itinerant service. Half of them at least retired, in from two to five years. Some, however, were eminent in their day either for talents, or for services before or after their location. We catch a few glimpses of them in our early publications.

William Partridge, a Virginian, born in 1754, and converted in 1775, became well known as an evangelist to the far South. He located, after nine years of laborious service, but re-entered the itinerant ranks again in 1814, and died a veteran, in 1817, in Sparta, Georgia. "Though surrounded," say the Minutes, "with those who held slaves, he would have none." He not "only professed sanctification, but lived it." A neighbor who had lived near him more than twenty years declared that "he was the greatest example of piety I have ever known." "For me to die is gain," was one of his exclamations on his death-bed. James Oliver Cromwell will hereafter recur in our narrative, as the colleague of Garrettson, in the founding of Methodism in Nova Scotia in 1785. He located in 1793, but lived long "an humble,

[30] Journals, May, 1780. His statistical estimates are conjectural and inaccurate.

[31] Bangs's Garrettson, p. 112.

sweet-spirited old minister." Thomas Foster, a native of Virginia, did heroic service in the itinerancy down to the year 1792, and, during many additional years, as a Local Preacher. "No minister was more esteemed on account of sound talent and a holy life." Caleb Boyer was born in Delaware, and converted under the ministry of Garrettson in 1778. At the organization of the Church he was elected one of its original elders, and "was one of the greatest preachers that the Methodists then had." The "allowance" of an itinerant could not support his family, and he located in 1788. He lived about twenty-five years at Dover, Del., working for the Church to the last.

George Mair was a bright and shining light of that age, especially in New Jersey, where he labored generally and mightily. He was not only a flaming preacher, but was noted for his happy tact in colloquial exhortation, and in adapting his familiar appeals to all classes. Many were the converts he won at their own doorways. Some of the hardest characters and lowest families, otherwise inaccessible to the Gospel, were thus reached, and raised up to exemplary virtue and domestic piety and comfort. If, in these labors, occasional examples of native simplicity and rudeness, or even fanaticism, occurred, they were more than redeemed by the salutary results of the prudent itinerant's counsels. He delighted to gather such converts in the love-feasts of Methodism, where remarkable scenes were often witnessed. A Methodist of the times has described one of these occasions, at which some striking examples of Mair's usefulness were presented. "I saw," he writes, "a pleasing exhibition in a love-feast at a quarterly meeting held by our missionary, George Mair, previous to his taking leave of his spiritual children in the north-west part of

East Jersey. I saw there those who had cordially hated, lovingly embrace each other, and heard them praise the Lord who had made them one in Christ. The meeting was held in a barn, attended by several preachers, one of whom opened it on Saturday, and great power accompanied the word. Many wept aloud, some for joy, and some for grief. Many, filled with amazement, fled, and left room for the preachers to have access to the mourners, to pray with and exhort them to believe in the Lord Jesus, which many did, and rejoiced with great joy. Such a meeting I had never seen before. Next morning we met early for the love-feast. All that had obtained peace with God, and all who were seeking it, were invited, and the barn was nearly full. As few present had ever been in a love-feast, Mair explained to us its nature and design, namely, to take a little bread and water, not as a sacrament, but in token of our Christian love, in imitation of a primitive usage, and then humbly and briefly to declare the great things the Lord had done for them in having had mercy on them. James Sterling, of Burlington, was the first who spoke, and the plain and simple narrative of his Christian experience was very affecting to many. After him rose one of the new converts, a Mr. Egbert, and said, 'I was standing in my door, and saw a man (Mair) at a distance, well mounted on horseback, and as he drew near I had thoughts of hailing him, to inquire the news; but he forestalled me by turning into my yard and saying to me, "Pray, sir, can you tell me the way to heaven?" "The way to heaven, sir! we all *hope* to get to heaven, and there are *many ways* that men take." "Ah, but," said the stranger, "I want to know the best way." "Alright, sir, if you please; I should like to hear you talk about the way you deem the best. When I was a

boy I used to hear my mother talk about the way to heaven, and I am under an impression you must know the way." He did alight, and I was soon convinced the judgment I had formed of the stranger was true. My doors were opened, and my neighbors invited to come and see and hear a man who could and would, I verily believed, tell us the best way to heaven. And it was not long before myself, my wife, and several of my family, together with many of my neighbors, were well assured we were in the way, for we had peace with God, with one another, and did ardently long and fervently pray for the peace and salvation of all men. Tell me, friends, is not this the way to heaven? It is true, many of us were for a time greatly alarmed and troubled. We communed together, and said, It is a doubtful case if God will have mercy on us and forgive us our sins; and if he does, it must be after we have passed through long and deep repentance. But our missionary, to whom we jointly made known our unbelieving fears, said to us, "Cheer up, my friends, ye are not far from the kingdom of God. Can any of you be a greater sinner than Saul of Tarsus? and how long did it take him to repent? Three days were all. The Philippian jailer, too, in the same hour in which he was convicted, was baptized, rejoicing in God, with all his house. Come," said he, "let us have faith in God, remembering the saying of Christ, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Come, let us get down upon our knees and claim the merit of his death for the remission of sins, and he will do it; look to yourselves, each man, God is here." Instantly one who was, I thought, the greatest sinner in the house, except myself, fell to the floor as if dead; and we thought he was dead; but he was not literally dead, for there he sits, with as significant a smile

as any one present. Here the youth of whom he spoke uttered the word 'glory,' with a look and tone of voice that ran through the audience like an electric shock, and for a time interrupted the speaker; but he soon resumed his narrative, by saying, 'The preacher bid us not be alarmed; we must all *die* to *live*. Instantly I caught him in my arms, and exclaimed, The guilt I *felt* and the vengeance I *feared* are gone, and now I know heaven is not far off; but here and there, and wherever *Jesus* manifests himself, is *heaven*.' Here his powers of speech failed, and he sat down and wept, and there was not, I think, one dry eye in the barn. A German spoke next, and if I could tell what he said as told by him, it would be worth a place in any man's memory. But this I cannot do.[32] After him one got up

[32] He attempts it, however, and the incident is so characteristic, not only of the success of Mair, but of the simple piety of the times, and of a class of conversions not at all uncommon in that day, that I insert it here. "When the preacher did come to mine house, and did say, 'Peace be on this habitation; I am come, father, to see if in these troublesome times I can find any in your parts that does know the way to that country where war, sorrow, and crying be no more; and of whom could I inquire so properly as of one to whom God has given many days?' When he did say this I was angry, and did try to say to him, Go out of mine house; but I could not speak, but did tremble; and when mine anger was gone, I did say, I does fear I does not know the way to that goodist place, but mine wife does know; sit down, and I will call her. Just then mine wife did come in, and the stranger did say, 'This, father, is, I presume, your wife, of whom you say she does know the way to a better country—the way to heaven. Dear woman, will you tell it me?' After mine wife did look at the stranger one minute, she did say, '*I do know Jesus*, and is not he the way?' The stranger did then fall on his knees and thank God for bringing him to mine house, where was one that did know the way to heaven. He did then pray for me and mine children, that we might be like mine wife, and all go to heaven together. Mine wife did then pray in Dutch, and some of mine children did fall on their knees, and I did fall on mine; and when she did pray no more, the preacher did pray again, and mine oldest daughter did cry so loud. From that time I did seek the Lord, and did fear he would not hear me, for I had made the heart of mine

and said, for months previous to the coming of Mr. Mair into their place he was one of the most wretched of men. He had heard of the Methodists, and the wonderful works done among them, and joined in ascribing it all to the devil. At length a fear fell on him; he thought he should die and be lost. He lost all relish for food, and sleep departed from him. His friends thought him mad; but his own conclusion was that he was a reprobate, and he was tempted to shoot himself that he might know the worst. He at length resolved he would hear the Methodists; and when he came, the barn was full. There was, however, room at the door, where he could see the preacher and hear well. He was soon convinced he was no reprobate, and felt a heart to beg of God to forgive him for ever harboring a thought that he, the kind Parent of all, had reprobated any of his children. And listening, he at length understood the cause of his wretchedness. It was guilt, from which

wife so sorry when I did tell her she was mad. But the preacher did show me so many promises that I did tell mine wife if she would forgive me, and fast and pray with me all day and all night, I did hope the Lord would forgive me. This did please mine wife, but she did say, 'We must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' About the middle of the night I did tell mine wife I should not live till morning, mine distress was too great. But she did say, 'Mine husband, God will not let you die;' and just as the day did break mine heart did break, and tears did run so fast, and I did say, 'Mine wife, I now believe mine God will bless me,' and she did say, 'Amen, Amen, come, Lord Jesus.' Just then mine oldest daughter, who had been praying all night, did come in and did fall on mine neck, and said, 'O mine father, Jesus has blessed me.' And then joy did come into mine heart, and we have gone on rejoicing in the Lord ever since. Great fear did fall on mine neighbors, and mine barn would not hold all the peoples that does come to learn the way to heaven.' His looks, his tears, and his broken English kept the people in tears, mingled with smiles, not with lightness, but joy, for they believed every word he said." The "dignity" of history contemns such scenes, but the human heart will ever respect and weep over them. Even history, at least the history of Methodism, would be fatally defective were it totally to ignore such illustrative data.

Jesus came to save us. The people all around him being in tears, and hearing one in the barn cry, 'Glory to Jesus!' hardly knowing what he did, he drew his hat from under his arm, and swinging it over his head, began to huzza with might and main. The preacher saw him, and knew he was not in sport, (for the tears were flowing down his face,) and smiling, said, 'Young man, thou art not far from the kingdom of God; but rather say, Halleluiah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.' Several others spoke, and more would have spoken had not a general cry arisen, when the doors were thrown open, that all might come in and see the way that God sometimes works."[33]

Mair fell at his post in 1785, "a man of affliction," say the old Minutes, "but of great patience and resignation, and of an excellent understanding." He was the second itinerant who died after the organization of the Church, his friend Pedicord being the first.

Ignatius Pigman was a man of renown in these days, one of the most eloquent preachers of Methodism. He located in 1788 to provide for his family. Our best antiquary of this period says: "All the preachers received on trial this year continued to honor God and Methodism during life. Some of them soon ended their itinerant career; others had a longer race. Stephen Black and George Mair soon died in the Lord. The latter was no ordinary preacher. William Partridge, James O. Cromwell, and Thomas Foster continued many years as lights and ornaments of Methodist Christianity. Their memory is blessed. Caleb Boyer was regarded as a great preacher in his day, and his life was untarnished to the end."[34]

The venerable Thomas Ware, who began his Methodistic career about these times, often alludes with emotion

[33] Ware's Life, p. 63.

[34] Lednum, p. 306.

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to these faithful, self-sacrificing men. He speaks of Mair as "the grave, the undaunted, who was invincible to everything but truth." Boyer and Pigman he says were "among the first preachers. They were esteemed men of superior claims; and it is presumed that there have been few, in any age or country, who could extemporize with either of these primitive Methodist missionaries. Be that as it may, in preaching Boyer was the Paul, and Pigman the Apollos of the Methodist connection at that time. When Whatcoat and Vasey heard them, at the Christmas Conference, they said they had not heard their equal in the British connection, except Wesley and Fletcher. These men, who copied with great fidelity and exactness the example of humility and self-devotion set by the apostle of the Gentiles, were held in high estimation by the Methodists of 1788. It was accordingly a matter of much grief when they abandoned the itinerant ranks."

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH—CONTINUED.

Conference of 1781 — Union confirmed — Proceedings — Progress — Sketches of Preachers — Jeremiah Lambert — Joseph Wyatt — Philip Bruce — His last Words to his Conference — Joseph Everett — Character of the Ministry — Sessions of 1782 — Asbury and Jarratt — Prosperity of the Year — Sketch of Peter Moriarty — Woolman Hickson — He introduces Methodism into Brooklyn — Ira Ellis — John Easter — Illustrations of his Ministry — Sessions of 1783 — Continued Success — Proceedings — Small Number of Married Preachers — William Phœbus — Thomas Ware — Characteristic Interview with Asbury — Isaac Rollins's Death — Asbury's Letters to Shadford and Wesley.

In 1781 a preparatory Conference was held by Asbury, and about twenty preachers, at Judge White's, in Delaware, on the 16th of April; but the regular session began in Baltimore on the 24th. The restoration of harmony seemed now nearly complete. Asbury wrote at the Baltimore session: "All but one agreed to return to the old plan and give up the administration of the ordinances. Our troubles now seem over from that quarter, and there appears to be a considerable change in the preachers from North to South. All was conducted in peace and love." Watters, pre-eminently the "peacemaker" in these times, was broken down by labors and illness, but hastened to Baltimore to see what would be the result of the measures of the year. "Faint," he says, "and exceedingly debilitated, yet able to sit on my horse, and being anxious to meet with my brethren once more before I go hence, I set off, about twelve o'clock,

took my seat in Conference, and was not a little comforted in finding all so united in the bonds of the peaceable Gospel of Jesus Christ. We rejoiced together that the Lord had broken the snare of the devil, and our disputes were all at an end."

Their restored harmony was confirmed by the evident blessing of God upon the labors of the past year. No less than 10,539 members were reported, showing an increase of 2,035. Lee records that "the Lord had wonderfully favored the traveling preachers, so that we spread our borders, and our numbers increased abundantly." There were twenty-five circuits, a gain of five; and fifty-five preachers, including Asbury, a gain of twelve. Deducting the "locations," the ministerial additions were no less than seventeen.[1]

Thirty-nine preachers, probably all who were present save one, subscribed a declaration of their determination "to discountenance a separation among either preachers or people," and "to preach the old Methodist doctrine, and strictly enforce the Discipline, as contained in the Notes, Sermons, and Minutes published by Wesley." They resolved again to receive no ministerial candidate into "full connection" till after a probation of two years, excepting special cases, having "general approbation." Probationers for Church membership were required to remain on trial three months. A rule was provided to prevent litigation among members in their secular business; the preacher was instructed to "consult with the circuit steward in appointing proper persons" as arbiters, and the parties were required to "abide by their

[1] Lee says twenty; Lednum, nineteen. Lednum is remarkable for his accuracy. When I have not been able to confirm him I have been equally unable to refute him. The defects of the old Minutes are superabundant. Some preachers on the list of appointments are not found in the list of candidates, and *vice versa*.

decision, or be excluded from the Society." It was also determined that the preachers should "read often," before the Societies, the "General Rules," and Wesley's "Character of a Methodist," and his "Plain Account of Christian Perfection;" that they should call out no Local Preacher, to travel on a circuit, without Asbury's consent as general assistant, or the consent of other "assistants;" and that each preacher, having charge of a circuit, should give to his successor "a circumstantial account, in writing, of his circuit, both of Societies and Local Preachers, with a plan," and should promote the improvement of the circuit finances. Four general fasts were appointed for the ensuing year.[2]

Of the more than 10,500 Methodists now reported in the country, there were but 873 north of the southern boundary of Pennsylvania; 9,666 were below it.[3]

Again it must be recorded that most of the new itinerants soon retreated from the severities of the field; some made deplorable shipwreck of the faith; some three or four entered the ministry of other denominations, especially of the Protestant Episcopal Church—a much more frequent change, in these early years, than is generally supposed; but some were faithful to the end, and worthy of grateful commemoration.

Jeremiah Lambert was one of the earliest and best preachers contributed to the itinerancy by New Jersey. At the organization of the Church he was ordained an elder for the West India Islands. In recording his death, in 1786, the Conference pronounces him "an elder six years in the work; a man of sound judgment, clear understanding, good gifts, genuine piety, and very useful,

[2] Bangs, i, p. 141. errs in attributing to this session the "first" record of locations. It occurred in 1779.

[3] Lednum, p. 313.

humble, and holy; diligent in life, and resigned in death; much esteemed in the connection, and justly lamented in his death. We do not sorrow as men without hope, but expect shortly to join him and all those who rest from their labors." Ware, of New Jersey, knew him well, and says "he had in four years, (when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized,) without the parade of classical learning, or any theological training, actually attained to an eminence in the pulpit which no ordinary man could reach by the aid of any human means whatever. He was most emphatically a primitive Methodist preacher, preaching out of the pulpit as well as in it. The graces with which he was eminently adorned were intelligence, innocence, and love. These imparted a glow of eloquence to all he said and did." He has the honor, as we shall hereafter see, of being the first Methodist preacher designated, in the Minutes, to an appointment beyond the Alleghanies.

Joseph Wyatt, from Kent Co., Del., was sent out to preach by Asbury in 1780. He was feeble in health, and broke down, and located in 1788, but could not abide out of the ranks of his itinerant brethren; he rejoined them in 1790, and did good service for about seven years more, when he was compelled finally to retire. In the latter part of his life he was chaplain to the Maryland Legislature. Ware says: "Wyatt was among those worn down by labor. Except his want of physical strength, he was little inferior to any among us, and in purity, perhaps to none. His sermons were short, but composed of the best materials, and delivered in the most pleasing manner."

Philip Bruce, of North Carolina, was of Huguenotic descent, a soldier of the Revolution, and one of the most laborious founders of the Church in the South.

For thirty-six years he bore faithfully the standard of the Gospel as an itinerant; "traveling," say his brethren, "extensively on circuits and districts, and filling the most important stations, with honor to himself, in those days that tried men's souls."[4] "Worn down by labors and years," he reluctantly took a "superannuated relation" to the Virginia Conference in 1817; and, against the "affectionate solicitations" of his brethren of that body, "many of whom had been raised by his fostering hand," he retired to his kindred in Tennessee, where he labored, as he had strength, till his death in 1826. Not long before his decease he wrote to his old fellow-laborers in Virginia: "It is very probable that I shall never see you again. Though in my zeal I sometimes try to preach, my preaching is like old Priam's dart, thrown by an arm enfeebled with age. My work is well nigh done; I am waiting in glorious expectation for my change; I have not labored and suffered for naught, nor followed a cunningly-devised fable." He closed his useful life the oldest traveling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, except Freeborn Garrettson. He was a man of high and firm character and intellect. There was a strong disposition in the General Conference of 1816 to elect him Asbury's successor in the Episcopate, and "probably nothing but his age prevented it."[5] The Virginia Conference voted him a monument. One of his cotemporaries says: "He was rather tall, and his face expressed heroic determination and perseverance. He was a man of decidedly vigorous intellect. He saw things clearly. He acted conscientiously, and with great firmness of purpose. His preaching was bold and earnest. As a member of Conference he was always listened to with profound attention and

[4] Minutes, 1827.

[5] Lednum, p. 328

respect. He impressed you as a man who was well fitted to be at the helm in times of darkness and difficulty. He possessed a truly magnanimous spirit; for of this I happen to have had personal experience. When the subject of the ordination of Local Elders was before the Conference, I offered a resolution not in accordance with his views, and he felt himself called upon to oppose it. In doing so he spoke with a little more warmth than he thought, upon mature reflection, was justified by the circumstances of the case; and, after the discussion was over, he came to me, and in the most manly spirit apologized for what he considered his unreasonable warmth."[6]

Joseph Everett, a native of Maryland, was long known in the Middle States as one of the veterans of Methodism; a man of unique character, of exhaustless energy, profoundest piety, and extraordinary success. He has been called "the roughest-spoken preacher that ever stood in the itinerant ranks;" and the style of an autobiographic sketch of his life has been cited as an example of his rude but direct and strenuous language in the pulpit. He describes himself as having been one of Bunyan's "biggest Jerusalem sinners." "As to religion,"[7] he says, speaking of his early life, "we had none, but called ourselves of the Church of England. We went to church, and heard dead morality, delivered by a blind, avaricious minister. My nature was a fit soil for the devil's seed to take root and grow in. I learned to swear, to tell lies, and vent my angry passions. I was often uneasy, afraid to die, and felt a weight of guilt that caused me to resolve to do better. I never heard one Gospel sermon until I was grown up. In this state of wickedness I lived till I was married. I chose a com-

[6] Dr. Laban Clark, in Sprague's Annals, p. 75.
[7] Lednum, p. 328.

panion that was as willing to go to the devil as I was; it would have puzzled a philosopher to determine which of us loved sin most. Thus I went on until the Whitefieldites came about. I went to hear them, and saw myself in the way to hell; and was taught that I must be born again, and know my sins forgiven. I began to fall out with my sins, to read the Bible, to pray in secret, and likewise in my family; thus I went on for nearly two years. The minister that I heard taught that Christ died for a certain number, and not one of them would be lost; that all the rest of mankind would be damned and sent to hell; that the elect must persevere and go to heaven. The Lord knows what I suffered by it. I was no stranger to persecution, as I reproved sin. By this time I was thought to be a great Christian; but, as yet, was a stranger to the knowledge of sins forgiven. In 1763 I went into a chamber to seek that blessing; I was on my knees but a few moments before the Lord shed his love abroad in my heart, and I felt I had redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. I was so simple that I thought there was no sin in my heart. But in a short time the enemy of my soul began to work upon the unrenewed part of my nature, and I felt pride, self-will, and anger. Our minister told us that though we might know our sins forgiven, it was impossible to live without sin. Thus the devil found out a scheme that answered his purpose; he baited his hook, and I swallowed it. I still went to hear preaching, and prayed in my family, but my conscience told me that I was a hypocrite. My principle was, 'that there was no falling from justifying grace;' and indeed it was impossible for me to fall, for I had shamefully fallen already. The brethren began to look very coldly at me, and as I grew worse they disowned me, saying I had never been con-

verted; and for months I never went to meeting. Thus I went on to please my master, the devil. My conscience giving me no rest, I took the method that Cain took to stifle his: he by the noises of axes and hammers in building cities; I by the hurry of business and the clash of wicked company, and often by drinking."

Being a hearty patriot, he became a soldier of the Revolution, and endeavored to stifle his restless conscience in the camp, but unsuccessfully, for there was, deep in his hardy nature, an inextinguishable moral sensibility, the chief element of his subsequent devout and decided character. He went to the home of his friend, Dr. White, near that of Judge White, to hear a Methodist. Asbury preached, "and," writes Everett, "my prejudice subsided, and a way was opened for conviction. The human soul is like a castle, that we cannot get into without a key. Let the key be lost, and the door continues shut. I once had the key, but the devil had got it from me. I began to feel the returns of God's grace to revisit my soul. The eyes of the people began to be upon me. My old companions looked very coolly at me; and the Methodists had their eyes on me, no doubt for good; especially my friend Edward White frequently asked me home with him, and conversed with me on Methodism; knowing I was Calvinistic, he furnished me with the writings of Mr. Wesley and Fletcher. I once heard him say, 'If Christ died for all, all are salvable; and they that are lost are lost by their own fault;' which gave me more insight into the scheme of redemption than ever I got before by all the reading and hearing I had practiced. I was more and more engaged to save my soul. In retiring to pray, it seemed that I could hear the fiend say, 'What! are you praying again? you had better quit; after a while you will tire, and leave off as you did

before.' I went forward in the way of duty, and on the 5th day of April, 1778, the Lord set my soul once more at liberty. I read Mr. Wesley on Perfection, but the mist of Calvinism was not wiped from my mind; it had taught me that temptations are sins. I could not distinguish between sins and infirmities. I began to feel the necessity of joining the Society, which I did, in order to grow in grace. I began to speak to my acquaintance about their souls, and sometimes to preach, and found that some were wrought upon. In family prayer, sometimes, the power of the Lord would descend in such a manner as to cause the people to mourn and cry. Nor would they be able to rise from the floor for half a night. My exercises about preaching were so great that I have awaked from sleep and found myself preaching. While I was in the way to hell I lived, for the most part of my time, without labor; now I earned my bread by the labor of my hands, and studied divinity at the plow, ax, or hoe. At last I disclosed my mind (on the subject of preaching) to my friend Edward White. At this time that man of God, Pedicord, was riding the circuit. He sent for me to meet him, at an appointment near Mr. White's, and asked me to give an exhortation, and then gave me a certificate to exhort. The 1st of October, 1780, I went to Dorset Circuit, and had seals to my ministry. I stayed four weeks, and returned to secure my crop. By this time the devil, by his emissaries, had put it into the heart of my wife to prevent my traveling. She made a great noise, which gave me much trouble. I might as well have undertaken to reason with a stone. Till now she had some faint desire to save her soul; but this banished all from her heart. I returned to Dorset, and stayed till February, 1781, when I was sent to Somerset Circuit to labor in Annamessex. My labors were

abundantly blessed; many found peace with God, and some large Societies were formed."

In the autumn of 1781 he was sent to West Jersey, where his labors were greatly blessed. At the Conference of 1782 he says, "I was appointed to East Jersey, with that man of God, John Tunnell, whom I loved as another self." While preaching here his hard blows had stirred the ire of the people about Germantown, and the mob was after him with clubs; but, finding that he was legally qualified to preach, they retreated.

In 1783 he says: "At the Conference I was appointed, with John Coleman and Michael Ellis, to travel Baltimore Circuit, where the Lord still blessed his word. By this time I got to see into the Bible in a deeper manner than ever; so that it seemed like another, a new book to me. By this time the Lord had heard and answered my prayers, in the conversion of my wife, which lightened my burden. She saw that she had been fighting against God, in treating me wrongly, which wounded her very sensibly; and this was sweet revenge to me. She no more objected to my traveling."

At the Conference of 1784 he was appointed to Virginia, where he traveled and preached with tireless zeal, and "many souls were awakened and converted." Down to 1809 did this "strong man armed," though wielding the most unpolished weapons, fight "the good fight," almost everywhere with victory; and he fell at his post at last with shouts of triumph. An historian of Methodism who knew him, and who pronounces him "a remarkable man,"[8] says, "he was indeed anointed of God to preach the Gospel. He was eminently distinguished for the boldness, the pointedness, and energy with which he rebuked sin, and warned the sinner of his

[8] Bangs, ii., p. 285.

danger. And these searching appeals to the consciences of his hearers made them tremble under the fearful apprehension of the wrath of God, and their high responsibility to him for their conduct. Great was the success which attended his faithful admonitions; for wherever he went he was like a flame of fire. He joined the ranks of Methodism in its infancy in this country, and contributed largely to fix it on that broad basis on which it has since stood unshaken amid the storms and billows with which it had to contend. It would indeed seem that the Methodist preachers of those days were so imbued with the spirit of their Master, and so entirely absorbed in their peculiar work, that they thought of little else but saving souls from death. And so deeply penetrated were they with a sense of the 'exceeding sinfulness of sin,' that their rebukes to the sinner were sometimes tremendously awful, and fearfully pointed and solemn. This was peculiarly so with Everett. His whole soul seemed to be thrown into his subject whenever he preached, and his warnings and entreaties were enough to melt the stoutest heart, while he wound the cord of truth so tightly around the sinner's conscience as to make him writhe and tremble under the wounds it inflicted. The rich promises of the Gospel to penitent sinners dropped from his lips like honey from the honeycomb; and when believingly received by such, he rejoiced over them as a father rejoices over a returning prodigal, while with the happy believer he participated in all the fullness of perfect love." For about thirty years it may be said that he thundered the truth through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The Conference, in recording his death, said that wherever he traveled he "proclaimed the thunders of Sinai against the wicked, and the terrors of the Lord against the un-

godly. Few men in the ministry were ever more zealous and laborious; he was bold, undaunted, and persevering, and the Lord prospered him and gave him seals to his ministry; he was abundant in labors as long as his strength endured; his manner and usefulness are well known to thousands. He feared the face of no man. He spent his time, his talents, his all, in the service of the connection." The closing scene of his life is recorded as "very remarkable." He died in 1809, in his seventy-eighth year, under the roof of his friend Dr. White, where he had often found an asylum. About midnight he awoke from a tranquil slumber, and "immediately his devout and pious soul entered into an uncommon ecstasy of joy; with exclamations of adoration, in raptures, he shouted for twenty-five minutes, 'Glory! glory! glory!' and then ceased to shout and ceased to breathe at once." "It is worthy of notice that he started as a traveling preacher from the house of Dr. White, and at Dr. White's house he died. He set out to travel in the month of October, and in the month of October he died. The first circuit he traveled was Dorchester, and in Dorchester he died." "Thus," say his brethren, "ended the warfare and sufferings of our venerable father and brother in Christ, Joseph Everett; who, like an old soldier worn out in the service, had borne the burden and heat of the day with firmness and perseverance. He endured the trials, hardships, and sufferings of many perilous and fatiguing campaigns; but now the warfare is past, the victory is gained, and the scene is closed in triumphant shouts."

Such were some of the itinerants who entered the ranks this year. The ministry, now more than half a hundred strong, was fast becoming a great power in the land. It already included men of gigantic moral and

intellectual stature, and they kept most of the middle and southern colonies astir with their ceaseless proclamations of the truth amid the distractions of the war. No thoughtful observer could fail to perceive that the energies and materials of a mighty ecclesiastical structure, probably to be coextensive with the continent, were being gathered and consolidated, and must, if overtaken by no early disaster, assume, before long, firm foundations and impregnable strength. Happily the war was now ending; the British forces surrendered in the autumn, at Yorktown, and with the return of peace the whole land was to open as the arena of the heroic evangelists.

The Conference of 1782 held two sessions; the first on the 17th of April, at Ellis's Chapel, Sussex County, Va., the second on the 21st of May, at Baltimore.[9] They are recorded in the Minutes as one Conference. It was, in fine, now understood that two sessions should be held annually for the accommodation of the widely dispersed preachers; but the legislative power of the body was limited to the oldest or more northern portion of the ministry. "Accordingly," says Lee, "when anything was agreed to in the Virginia Conference, and afterward disapproved of in the Baltimore Conference, it was dropped. But if any rule was fixed and determined on at the Baltimore Conference, the preachers in the south were under the necessity of abiding by it. The Southern Conference was considered, at this time, as a convenience, and designed to accommodate the preachers in that part of the work, and to do all the business of a regular Conference, except that of making or altering particular rules." When, however, the Conferences became more numerous the legislative function became common to them all, no measure being considered as enacted till it had been pre-

[9] Asbury says the latter began on the 20th.

sented at all the sessions of the year, and received general approval.

We have already had a passing but refreshing glimpse of the Virginia session of this year, in the sketch of Jesse Lee, who there witnessed, for the first time, an assemblage of Methodist itinerants, and declared that it "exceeded" in "union and brotherly love" "everything he had ever seen before." Asbury wended his way toward it from North Carolina with some anxiety to ascertain how far the pacificatory measures of the last year had been successful. He arrived at Jarratt's house, and on Sunday, 14th of April, says: "I preached at the chapel, and we then went to church. I read the lessons of Mr. Jarratt, who preached a great sermon on union and love, from the 123d Psalm; we received the sacrament, and afterward went home with him, that we might accompany him to our Conference. I have been much tried, inwardly and outwardly. I have been deeply and solemnly engaged in public, in families, and more especially in private, for a blessing on the people, and for union and strength among the preachers at our approaching Conference."

On the following Tuesday he set out for the Conference, accompanied by Jarratt, who, as a clergyman of the English Church, had taken a deep interest in the "sacramental contest." They arrived the next day and found the people flocking together for preaching. Jarratt opened the occasion with a sermon on the fourteenth chapter of Hosea. It afforded him topics of warning respecting the late controversy, but also prophetical and sublime encouragements for the peacemakers. "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his

smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." Jarratt preached every day of the session, and adminstered the Lord's supper to the preachers and people.

Asbury gives us a few further notices of this Conference. He says: "As there had been much distress felt by those of Virginia, relative to the administration of the ordinances, I proposed, to such as were so disposed, to enter into a written agreement to cleave to the old plan in which we had been so greatly blessed, that we might have the greater confidence in each other, and know on whom to depend. This instrument was signed by the greater part of the preachers without hesitation. Next morning I preached on Phil. ii, 1–5. I had liberty, and it pleased God to set it home. One of the preachers, James Haw, who had his difficulties, was delivered from them all; and with the exception of one, all the signatures of the preachers present were obtained. We received seven into connection, and four remained on trial. At noon Mr. Jarratt spoke on the union of the attributes."

The Conference closed on Friday, its business "being amicably settled." Jarratt preached at its adjournment, on "A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," etc. A love-feast followed; "the power of God," says Asbury, "was manifested in a most extraordinary manner; preachers and people wept, believed, loved, and obeyed." On the next Sunday Asbury was preaching in Jarratt's barn. Jarratt, he says, "seemed all life, and determined to spend himself in the work of God, and visit what circuits he could." The Conference inserted in its Minutes the declaration that they "acknowledge their obligations to the Rev.

Mr. Jarratt, for his kind and friendly services to the preachers and people, from our first entrance into Virginia, and more particularly for attending our Conference in Sussex, and advise the preachers, in the South, to consult him, and take his advice in the absence of Brother Asbury." Asbury adds: "I am persuaded the separation of some, from our original plan about the ordinances, will, upon the whole, have a tendency to unite the body together, and to make preachers and people abide wherein they are called. I see abundant cause to praise God for what he has done." His Journal affords us but few intimations of the Baltimore session. On Monday, the 20th of May, he says: "A few of us began Conference in Baltimore; next day we had a full meeting. The preachers all signed the agreement, proposed at the Virginia Conference, and there was a unanimous resolve to adhere to the old Methodist plan. We spent most of the day in examining the preachers. We had regular daily preaching. Wednesday, 22, we had many things before us. Our printing plan was suspended for the present for want of funds. Friday, 24, was set apart for fasting and prayer. We had a love-feast; the Lord was present, and all was well. The preachers in general were satisfied. I found myself burdened with labors and cares. We have now fifty-nine traveling preachers, and eleven thousand seven hundred and eighty-five in Society. Our young men are serious, and their gifts are enlarged."

The statistics of the year show continued prosperity. The membership, amounting to 11,785, showed an increase of 1,246. There were sixty preachers, including Asbury, a gain of five; thirteen candidates were received on trial,[10] and twenty-six circuits were recorded on the roll of appointments.

[10] Lee's History, p. 79.

The Conference unanimously recognized Asbury as General Assistant, "according to Mr. Wesley's original appointment" before the arrival of Rankin. It was ordained, for the first time, that a certificate of membership should be required of laymen removing from one Society to another. The times and places of the sessions of the ensuing year also occur, for the first time, in the Minutes.

A large proportion of the preachers, who appeared for the first time in the appointments this year, traveled but a few years. Some new heroes, however, now entered the field, whose names the Church should not willingly let die.

Peter Moriarty has left a fragrant memory in the denomination. He is another example of that powerful influence which Methodism exerted, in its early days, over the popular mind, subduing the prejudices of education, and smiting, with irresistible religious convictions, all classes of men who came within the reach of its ministrations. He left a brief manuscript narrative of his early Christian experience, in which he says he was born in Maryland, Baltimore County, April 27, 1758. His parents were Roman Catholics, and his early education was in the Catholic faith. At eleven years of age he was taken to the priest (by his parents) to confess his sins, according to the custom of the Catholics, as also to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which he was taught to believe was the real body and blood of Christ. "I went on," he writes, "in this blind way till I was about sixteen years of age, when it pleased God to send the Methodists into the neighborhood where I was born. They soon made a great stir among the people. At length a way providentially opened for me to hear them. They seemed more like angels than men; yet I concluded they could not be right, because they preached that men must know their

sins forgiven, in this life, in order to be happy hereafter, which I thought to be impossible. I continued to hear them till it pleased the Lord to open my eyes; I then saw that all my confessions to the priest were only delusions of Satan; I was yet in the road to destruction, with all my sins upon my head. It was then said, by priest and people, 'that the Methodists had made me mad,' and, 'that I ought to be restrained from hearing them.' My distress was inconceivably great; I was afraid of God and man; I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep for some time, I felt such a pressing load of guilt My father looked upon me as a graceless child, and said that by my weeping and wailing for my sins I was bring ing disgrace on the family; and threatened, if I did not desist, he would turn me away from his house. I applied myself to reading the Scriptures, and sought the Lord according to the light I had, until He looked upon me in my distress, and spoke peace to my troubled soul. I felt that God was reconciled. After this I joined the Society, and for several years remained a private member. When about twenty years of age I began to feel much impressed to call sinners to repentance. Upon this subject my trials were severe; they so affected me that, by reasonings and temptations of Satan, I almost lost my senses. My inability to so great a work was constantly before me. After a long struggle, and a variety of exercises, I gave myself up to the work of the ministry in the year 1781." He appears to have begun to travel in the interim of the Conference, as his name does not appear in the Minutes till 1782, when he is recorded as remaining on trial.

Down to 1785 his appointments were within the old Virginia Conference. In 1786, following the example of many of the preachers of the Middle States, he started

northward, and was stationed in Philadelphia; in 1787 he advanced still further, and was appointed to Long Island Circuit. We shall hereafter find him in the far West. In the year 1801 he entered New England, and traveled the Litchfield Circuit. In 1811–13 he had charge of Ashgrove District, which brought him again into New England. In the latter year, while on his way from the Conference to his field of labor, he was attacked by fever, and remained at a friend's on the route, unable to proceed. When he had partially recovered, he resumed his journey; but, on arriving at his home, in Hillsdale, May 25th, he was unfit to prosecute his ministerial duties. The "ruling passion" was with him, however, "strong in death;" he had been sounding the alarm through the land for more than thirty-two years, and this delay for death seemed too long and too indolent. Believing himself better, he retired to bed on the night of the 23d of June, directing his little son to have his horse ready early the next morning, that he might again take the field, and attend a Quarterly Conference which was to be held that day a few miles distant. In the morning, when called, he was silent; a higher summons had come to him. A physician who was called pronounced him dead, and to have been so several hours. Thus did this faithful soldier of the cross lay down in his tent at night to rest from his conflicts, and in the morning was not, for God had taken him. "On the day he was interred he was to have held a Quarterly Meeting about three miles from his house. But who can tell the consternation of the people, collecting from a large circuit, who on the spot met their presiding elder in his coffin! A funeral sermon was delivered to an attentive, weeping congregation, collected from every direction."[11] The obituary record of his

[11] Minutes, 1814.

Conference says: "He was among the oldest of our traveling ministers, and held a rank that entitled him to the confidence and the affections of the connection; and no doubt but his Lord will pronounce him worthy to wear a crown in his kingdom, in which there will be many stars. Although he might not have been classed among the greatest speakers, certainly he was among the most useful. Plain in his dress, plain in his manners, and plain and pointed in his preaching; upright in all his deportment: in short, his life was a constant comment upon the Gospel he preached. He delighted in good order and discipline; in the latter he was thought by some to be rather rigorous. He has gone out and in before the flock of God, respected by ministers and people. Even the careless and profane, who knew him in life, are ready to pour upon his tomb the honors his upright life deserved."

Woolman Hickson's "name is very precious to the lovers of early Methodism," says one of our best authorities.[12] He was "a man of splendid talents and brilliant genius," which shone the brighter by contrast with the shattered casket that inclosed them, for his whole public life was oppressed by physical suffering and feebleness. He labored in Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. He was John Dickens's colleague, in the latter, in 1787, as substitute for Henry Willis, who, though designated to the city, in the Minutes, did not arrive there.[13] "Though feeble, his soul burned with holy ardor to do what he could for his Master, and he preached and toiled till he 'his body with his charge laid down,' and went up to receive his reward."

Notwithstanding he was fast hastening to the grave by consumption, he applied to Asbury to be sent to Nova

[12] Wakeley's "Lost Chapters," p. 300. [13] Wakeley, p. 310.

Scotia, as a missionary, but the latter forbade him. While in New York he had the distinguishing honor of introducing Methodism into Brooklyn, L. I., which is now "the City of Churches." Captain Webb had preached there many years before, but he formed no class. Hickson's first sermon in Brooklyn was delivered in the open air, from a table, in what is called Sands-street, directly in front of where the Methodist Episcopal Church now stands. At the close of his discourse he said that if any person present would open his house for preaching he would visit them again. A gentleman, by the name of Peter Cannon, accepted the offer, and promised to prepare a place for the reception of the congregation. This place was no other than a cooper's shop. In a short time Hickson formed a class of several members. This was the first one formed in Brooklyn. He appointed Nicholas Snethen, afterward so famous as a preacher, its first leader.

This brilliant but transient light went out in the latter part of 1788. He lingered some time in New York, supported by the Society, and died without leaving money enough to defray the expense of his burial. The Church buried him. The Minutes commemorate him, in a few sentences, as of "promising genius, upright life, snatched away by consumption; seven years in the work."

Ira Ellis a Virginian, began his ministerial labors in 1781, and pursued them, some thirteen years, with commanding ability, from Philadelphia to Charleston, S. C. Asbury has recorded an extraordinary estimate of his talents and character. "A man of quick and solid parts," he says; "I have thought, had fortune given him the same advantages of education, he would have displayed abilities not inferior to Jefferson or Madison. But he had, what is better than learning; he had undis-

sembled sincerity, great modesty, deep fidelity, great ingenuity, and uncommon power of reasoning; he was a good man, of even temper." Like most of his fellow-itinerants of that day, he located in 1795 through domestic necessities.

John Easter is another remarkable name of these early days. "He was one of the most zealous, powerful, and successful preachers the Methodists ever had: he was the Benjamin Abbott of the South; an uncommonly faithful and holy man; and when crowns are bestowed, his will have uncommon luster, on account of its many brilliant gems. Wherever he labored, and he labored in earnest, the Lord gave him success; and in some places the work was wonderful, surpassing anything that had been previously witnessed. He was instrumental in one of the greatest revivals of religion that ever was in Virginia. This great work commenced in 1787. On Brunswick Circuit, where he was laboring, there were from fifteen hundred to two thousand converted to God, and on the adjoining circuit almost as many. The work in 1787 and in 1788 was both north and south of James River. In this revival William M'Kendree was awakened and converted under John Easter's preaching. About the same time, as this son of thunder was moving on, fulfilling his high commission, and the astonished multitudes trembled, and hundreds were falling down and crying, 'What must we do to be saved,' Enoch George was awakened and brought to Christ under this awful messenger of truth."[14] He was thus instrumental in raising up two of the most devoted and useful bishops of the Church. We shall hereafter meet him in one of the most extraordinary triumphs of Methodism in the further South. He traveled for ten

[14] Lednum, p. 354.

years, "a flaming herald of the cross," and after his location, in 1792, "continued to be the same faithful, holy Christian, serving the cause of Christ as a local preacher." He was noted for the power of his prayers as well as of his preaching. Under both, his hearers often fell insensible to the earth.

In 1783 the Conference held its two sessions again at Ellis's Preaching-house, Sussex County, Va., and Baltimore, Md., the former on the 7th,[15] the latter on the 27th of May. Asbury says of the former, "Some young laborers were taken in to assist in spreading the Gospel, which greatly prospers in the North. We all agreed in the spirit of African liberty, and strong testimonies were borne in its favor in our love-feast; our affairs were conducted in love."

Of the Baltimore session he merely remarks that on Tuesday "we began our Conference with what preachers were present. On Wednesday we had a full assembly, which lasted until Friday. We had a love-feast, and parted in peace." Garrettson says there "were about sixty preachers" at Baltimore, "all of whom appeared to be in the spirit of the Gospel."

The year had been prosperous; 13,740 members were reported, showing an increase of 1,955. There were now but 1,623 Methodists north of Mason and Dixon's line, 12,117 south of it. There were thirty-nine circuits;[16] New York and Norfolk reappear in the list. The corps of itinerants had increased from sixty to eighty-two, including Asbury.

The most important measures of this Conference were, like those of the preceding year, initiated at the Virginia

[15] The Minutes say the 6th of May; Asbury's Journals show it was the 7th.

[16] Minutes and Lednum. Lee says there were thirty-five.

session, though dependent for their validity on that of Maryland.[17] It took high "temperance" ground. We have seen that in 1780 the distillation of ardent spirits was denounced, and all Methodists who would not "renounce the practice" were to be "disowned." This year the Conference declared the manufacture, or sale or use of them "as drams," to be "wrong in its nature and consequences," and ordered its preachers "to teach the people to put away this evil." It took another bold position, strikingly significant for the time and the place. Asbury's allusion to the Virginia session shows that there was no little popular ardor for "African liberty," among both preachers and people, in that region. At the session of 1780 slavery was denounced, and "traveling preachers," owning slaves, were required to emancipate them. At Ellis's Preaching-house it was now required that "Local Preachers" should follow this example, wherever the civil laws would allow them. The Revolutionary struggle of the country had produced a general sentiment in favor of the liberty of all men. Methodism was now imbued with this sentiment, and gave at this time, and for some years, a more articulate expression of it than any other religious community of the land, not excepting the Society of Friends; but it at last fatally compromised its primitive convictions, and thereby entailed lamentable disasters upon itself, if not upon the whole nation.

It was determined at this Conference that all the "assistants," and preachers "to be received into full connection," should attend the annual sessions, the first intimation of the composition of the body.

There were some married preachers in the itinerant

[17] See Dr. Lee's Life of Lee, p. 100. This fact is determined by a manuscript of the proceedings, in the possession of Dr. Lee.

ranks, and it became necessary to provide better support for their families. It was proposed to raise two hundred and sixty pounds for the purpose; two hundred of them in "the north circuits." Each circuit was to contribute a public collection, whether its preachers were married or single. Eleven "preachers' wives" are named "to be provided for." They probably were most, if not all, who pertained to the ministry, a fact which indicates that about seventy-one, out of the eighty itinerants, were yet practically bound to celibacy, the necessity of their hard lot. We learn from the brief list that Dickens, Pigman, Haggerty, Watters, Everett, and Mair were among the married men. Two days of general thanksgiving for the public peace and for "the glorious work of God" were appointed, and two general fasts. It was resolved that no European Methodist should be received into the Societies "without a letter of recommendation."

Twenty preachers are recorded, for the first time, in the appointments of this year. Most of them traveled but few years. Jesse Lee, the first historian of American Methodism, and its founder in New England, was received at this Conference. His labors throughout our present period have already been reviewed.

Dr. William Phœbus was born in Somerset County, Md., in 1754, and was one of the earliest Methodists of that part of the state. After traveling about fifteen years he located, and studied and practiced medicine, in the city of New York, till 1806, when he re-entered the Conference. He occupied important positions till 1821, when he became a "supernumerary" member. He died in New York in 1831, aged seventy-seven years. He was at the Christmas Conference where the Church was organized. He was characterized by a philosophic cast of mind; was an able but not a popular preacher,

and possessed literary abilities much superior to the average attainments of his fellow-laborers. He edited a Magazine, for some time, in behalf of his denomination. His brethren pronounce him, in the Minute obituary, "a man of great integrity of character, uniformly pious, deeply read in the Scriptures, a sound, experimental, and practical preacher;" and say, "he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus."[18]

The itinerancy made one of its most important acquisitions, this year, in Thomas Ware, of New Jersey, a man of admirable character, an able and faithful laborer, who lived far into our own century, and has left us the best written autobiography, yet produced, by the American Methodist ministry. Not a few of our noblest evangelists, of the last century, whose names were fast passing into oblivion, through the paucity of our early records, have been rescued, for all time, to the history of the Church, by his affectionate and skillful delineations.

He was born in Greenwich, Gloucester County, N. J., in 1758. He had the inestimable advantage of a pious parentage. His father, especially, he says, was a Methodist before the Methodists were known in that part of the country; the only person there "who professed to know that his sins were forgiven." "His whole deportment tended," he adds, "to fix in me a habit of serious reflection on the subject of religion, and his triumphant death made an impression on my mind that time could not obliterate." His mother educated him strictly in the faith of Calvinism. At the breaking out of the Revolutionary War he responded to the call of his country, and entered the army. Though he had not yet made profession of a religious life, he began his new career with manly and even devout sentiments. "Some of my reflections," he

[18] Minutes of 1832.

says, after he had entered the field, "I can never forget while memory lasts. The cause I held to be just. On this point I had no misgivings. But whether we should be able to sustain our ground appeared to me a much more doubtful question. There must be, I was sure, much hard fighting and many valuable lives sacrificed to gain the boon of our independence, if we should succeed at last. And what will they gain, thought I, who shall fall in the struggle? The thanks of their country? No; they will be forgotten. But then the principles for which we were contending appeared to me worth risking life for. With the views I entertained of the justness of our cause in the sight of heaven I could not doubt, and resolved for one on liberty or death. 'But there is a hereafter,' was suggested to my mind. True, thought I, but I will do the best I can, and trust in God. And so it was, that as a soldier in the army, I was more devout than when at home; and I prayed until a confidence sprang up within me that I should return to my home and friends in safety, or not be cut off without time to make my peace with God." He was resolutely temperate in the camp, pouring upon the ground the strong drink given with his rations. He continued in the service till dismissed, as an invalid, suffering from "camp fever," which "cost him several years of the prime of his life."

He had leisure now for deeper reflections. "My physical powers," he says, "were paralyzed by protracted affliction, and my conscience, though greatly darkened, had yet some influence to restrain me from licentious freedom in wickedness. But how easily is man blinded by the deceitfulness of sin? When reason, always proud, silences conscience by a too hasty decision against its dictates, what is man? A steed broken

loose, bounding over hill and dale, gamboling in the wilderness, and on the barren waste. Thus was it with me, fool that I was. But the horrifying profaneness of scoffing infidels, with whom I came in contact, so shocked my feelings that I sped my way back, or rather turned aside, and sought an asylum from my woes in gloomy solitude. I was now for several months little better than a maniac. I delighted in nothing so much as being alone. To wander in retired places, and indulge in the reveries of my own mind, or among the works of God, with which I was surrounded, sometimes cherishing the delightful thought that I had an interest in the great Parent of all, and was an object of his pity, accorded most with my state of feeling. And on such occasions I was sometimes melted to tears."

It was while in this state of mind that he observed Pedicord riding into Mount Holly, as we have seen, singing a hymn which singularly accorded with his anxious feelings. He followed the itinerant a "great distance," fascinated by the pathos of his voice, and that night heard him preach. "Soon," he writes, "was I convinced that all men were redeemed and might be saved, and saved now, from the guilt, practice, and love of sin. With this I was greatly affected, and could hardly refrain from exclaiming aloud, 'This is the best intelligence I ever heard.' When the meeting closed I hastened to my lodgings, retired to my room, fell upon my knees before God, and spent much of the night in penitential tears. Pedicord returned again to our village. I hastened to see him, and tell him all that was in my heart. He shed tears over me, and prayed. I was dissolved in tears. He prayed again. My soul was filled with unutterable delight. He now rejoiced over me as a son, 'an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.' I felt and

knew that I was made free. And, as I had been firm in my attachment to the cause of civil freedom, I hoped that I should be enabled to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made me free."

He joined the Methodists, and fearlessly defended them among his associates. "It was strange," he says, "to see with what amazement many listened while I told them what the Lord had done for me. Some wept bitterly, confessed their ignorance of such a state, and pronounced me happy, while others thought me mad; and on the Methodists, not on me, laid all the blame of what they conceived to be my derangement."

He was made a Class-leader, and, not long after, an Exhorter. He possessed lively faculties, readiness of speech, and a pathos which gave him "the eloquence of tears." His brethren admonished him that it was his duty to preach, but he shrunk from the thought. About this time Asbury arrived at Pemberton, four miles from Mount Holly, and sent for him. The interview was so strikingly characteristic, of both the interlocutors, that it deserves to be cited. "I had not been introduced to him," writes Ware, "nor did he know me. On entering his room he fixed his discriminating eye upon me, and seemed to be examining me from head to foot as I approached him. He reached me his hand, and said, 'This, I suppose, is Brother Ware; or, shall I say, Pedicord the younger.' I replied, 'My name is Ware, sir, and I claim some affinity to the Wesleyan family, and Mr. Pedicord as my spiritual father.' 'You then revere the father of the Methodists?' said he. 'I do,' I replied, 'greatly; the first time I heard his name mentioned it was said of him, by way of reproach, that he had brought shame upon the Christian world by preaching up free will. Free will, said I, and what would you have him preach?

bound will? He might as well go with the Roman saint and preach to the fish, as preach to men without a will. From that time I resolved to hear the Methodists, against whom I had been so much prejudiced.' 'Sit down,' said Mr. Asbury, 'I have somewhat to say unto thee. Have all men since the fall been possessed of free will?' I replied that I considered they had since the promise made to Adam, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. 'Can man then turn himself and live?' said he. 'So thought Ezekiel,' I replied, 'when he said, "Turn yourselves and live;"' remarking, as I understood it, that he can receive the testimony which God has given of his Son; and thus, through grace, receive power to become a child of God. 'Are all men accountable to God?' he still further inquired. I replied, 'The almighty Jesus says, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be."' 'On what do you found the doctrine of universal accountability?' he added. 'On the doctrine of universal grace: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men,"' etc., was my reply. He then looked at me very sternly, and said: 'What is this I hear of you? It is said you have disturbed the peaceful inhabitants of Holly, by rudely entering into a house where a large number of young people were assembled for innocent amusement, and when welcomed by the company and politely invited to be seated, you refused, and proceeded to address them in such a way that some became alarmed and withdrew, and the rest soon followed.' To this I answered: 'My zeal in this affair may have carried me too far. But I knew them to be generally my friends and well-wishers, and felt to do as the man out of whom Christ cast a legion of devils was directed, namely, to go and show my friends how great

things God had done for me. It is true, when I entered the room, some appeared delighted to see me, and heartily welcomed me; but those who knew me best appeared sad. And when invited to take a glass and be seated, I told them I must be excused, for I had not come to spend the evening with them, but to invite them to spend it with me. "You know me," I said, "and how delighted I have often been in your company, and with the amusements in which you have met to indulge. But I cannot now go with you. My conscience will not permit me to do so. But as none of your consciences, I am persuaded, forbid your going with me, I have come to invite you to go with me and hear the excellent Mr. Pedicord preach his farewell sermon. Pardon me, my friends, I am constrained to tell you, the Lord has done great things for me through the instrumentality of this good man." The circle was not very large. Not a word of reply was made to what I said. Some were affected, and soon left after I withdrew. But I never knew that any one of the party was offended.' Asbury listened to this simple explanation of the matter attentively, but without relaxing the sternness of his look, or making any reply to it. He then branched off to another subject. 'Was it not bold and adventurous,' said he, 'for so young a Methodist to fill, for a whole week, without license or consultation, the appointments of such a preacher as George Mair?' I replied that Mr. Mair was suddenly called from the circuit by sickness in his family, and I saw that he was deeply afflicted, not only on account of the distress his family were suffering, but especially because of the disappointments it must occasion, on a part of the circuit, where there was a good work going on; that some of these appointments were new, and there was no one to hold any meeting with the people whatever; that I was

therefore induced, soon after he was gone, to resolve on going to some of these places and telling those, who might come out, the cause of the preacher's absence; and that if I was sometimes constrained to exhort these people, without a formal license, it was with fear and trembling, and generally very short, unless when the tears of the people caused me to forget that I was on unauthorized ground. He still said nothing, either by way of reproof or commendation, more than the manner of his introducing the subjects might seem to imply. And being under an impression that his remarks were designed to mortify me, for my course in the matter of the ball, and in taking the circuit in the absence of Mr. Mair, I said, 'Mr. Asbury, if the person who informed you against me had told me of my errors I would have acknowledged them.' Here he stopped me by clasping me in his arms, and saying in an affectionate tone: 'You are altogether mistaken, my son; it was your friend Pedicord who told me of your pious deeds, and advised that you should be sent to Dover Circuit, saying that he would be responsible that no harm, but good, would result from it.' He then told me that I must go down to the peninsula, and take the Dover Circuit, which had but one preacher on it; that I could tell the people, if I pleased, that I did not come in the capacity of a preacher, but only to assist in keeping up the appointments until another could be sent; and that he would give me a testimonial to introduce me; but if they did not cordially receive me, he said I might return, and he would see me compensated for my time and expenses. Here I was caught, and how could I decline? If, when my zeal prompted me to take a circuit, in the absence of a preacher, for one week, I had found favor in the sight of the people, so as to occasion my being recommended to

Asbury in this way, how could I refuse when he requested me to go and assist in keeping up the appointments on a circuit which needed aid, being now regularly licensed to exhort, until a preacher could be sent to it? So I told him, if he insisted on it, I would go and do the best I could; but I feared I should do more harm than good, and be unhappy in consequence of not being in my place."

Thus was Thomas Ware sent forth, in 1783, to begin his long and successful career. His reception on Dover Circuit was so cordial and hospitable, that he always recalled it with grateful interest. "I was made," he says, "to forget that I was among strangers. The simplicity, urbanity, and fervent piety of the Methodists were such that, after visiting a Society once, it seemed long before I was to return to it again. Some of the members were wealthy, and in the higher circles of life; but they were not ashamed to bear the cross. Among these there were some, particularly a number of females, distinguished for piety and zeal, such as I had never before witnessed. The lady of Counselor Bassett, and her two sisters, Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Ward, possessed an uncommon degree of the true missionary spirit, and greatly aided the young preachers, by whom, principally, the Lord was carrying on his work on that favored shore. To these might be added others, and especially the wife of Judge White, who was a mother in Israel. I had the happiness of receiving many young people into society. In Class-meetings I felt much at home, and frequently our rejoicing in the Lord was great. In my public exercises I was sometimes greatly embarrassed, when tears came to my relief, which was often the case; and there are few who can resist the eloquence of tears. In the mean time I prayed and read and wrote much.

My Bible was my chief book. After having been blessed in attempting to preach, I ventured, formally, to take a text; but not until advised, by some whom I considered competent judges, that my gift was rather to preach than to exhort."

His amenity and talents procured him general respect; but he sometimes encountered the trials which were then common to the itinerancy. He was invited to preach in a Protestant Episcopal Church on his circuit. "I had gone through a part of the morning service," he writes, "and was still in the desk, where I gave out my text; but, before I had finished my introductory remarks, three men came marching into the church, in Indian file, and halted just before the desk. The foremost one announced himself as a vestryman, and ordered me out of the desk and the church, or, he said, he would compel me to go out. Finding I did not comply, he seized me by the collar and dragged me from the desk. On seeing this, a giant of a man, near by, seized him, in like manner, and, raising his huge fist, told him if he did not let me go he would knock him down." Ware's assailant took the warning, and retreated with his companions.

Thomas Ware made a good beginning on Dover Circuit, and his long ministerial life verified the promise of his first year. We shall often meet him in the ensuing half century, and never part from him without reluctance.

It is sad to throw a shade on the picture of these times of primitive purity, illustrated by such examples of ministerial devotion and heroism. Soon after the present Conference occurred an instance of supposed apostasy, which startled the Methodist community, and was long recalled with awe. In about two months after the session, Asbury, entertained at the house of his friend, the aged Boehm, preached, in allusion to this deplorable

event, on the text, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Recording the occasion, he adds, that "having lately heard of the death of Isaac Rollins,[19] and having had an intimate acquaintance with him for some years, I will here notice some of the circumstances of his life. He was born and brought up in Patapsco Neck, and when grown up was uncommonly wicked. The Methodists, about this time, coming into those parts, he professed conviction and conversion through their instrumentality. Some time after this, he began to speak in public; roughly, but I believed in sincerity. I took notice of him, and appointed him to travel on the Eastern Shore; there he did some good and some harm. I then sent him to Pennsylvania; it was the same thing there. Eight years ago he was sent to Virginia. The first year he did much good, refusing, however, to take his appointment from the Conference; he stayed about Brunswick, causing disaffection among the people, whence sprung disorder. Thence we removed him to Pittsylvania, where he was also useful; here he would not long remain, but went off to James City. After a considerable time we received him again, although contrary to the advice of some who knew him better. About two years since he was appointed to Pennsylvania; this appears to have placed him where he wished to be, and he presently set about making a party, enjoining secrecy upon his followers. After one quarter he left us and set up for himself, and he and his few adherents took from us the Forest Chapel. He began now to be forsaken, and being too lazy to ride a circuit, took to baptizing, and begging by way of subscription. There were many reports about him which were probably true.

[19] His name is often given as Rawlins. I conform, in the text, to Lednum, our best authority in such cases.

From these scandalous imputations on his character he felt, it seems, the necessity of defending himself; and being at the Yellow Springs, he was for some hours employed in having his defense written. He did at times drink freely, but whether he was in liquor while there I know not; so it was, that setting off on a mettlesome horse, he had not ridden many yards before he was thrown to the ground, and died on the spot. I had said, 'I think he cannot stay long,' because he did pervert the right ways of the Lord. To the Lord I leave him, desiring that his sad example may be a warning to me and all preachers of the Gospel."

A good Methodist authority endeavors to find some justification of hope in the death of this unfortunate man.[20] Asbury's judgment was always severe in such cases. His own iron conscientiousness, and his rigorous habits of "discipline," led him to condemn deviations from "order" as dangerous, if not disastrous sins; and many of his allusions to men, whose opinions disagreed with his own, or whose infirmities clouded their last days, require no little qualification from the charity that "hopeth all things." Dempster, Poythress, Pigman, and even Strawbridge, are examples. A high historical authority[21] has eulogized the legislative skill of Wesley as providing a ministerial regimen, under which, as under the policy of the Papal Church, enthusiasm, fanaticism, if not insanity itself, could not only be restrained from doing serious mischief, but could expend their superabundant energy or excitability in useful labors. The "itinerant system," with its strict methods and its exhaustive work, left little time or force for mischief, and afforded sufficient but regulated variety even to the most eccentric minds; and the annals of American Methodism

[20] Lednum, p. 389. [21] Macaulay.

present not a few instances in which men, who otherwise would have been uncontrollably erratic, were transformed into unbending disciplinarians, powerful workers, and heroic characters. But there were occasional and inevitable exceptions: Glendenning, O'Kelly, Rollins, and others. Rollins was, from his outset, given to irregularities. His intellect was evidently infirm; a fact that to charitable minds will qualify every charge against him. His use of spirituous liquors, though exceptional among Methodist preachers, was the general custom of the times; so general that, as we have seen, the Conference began to be alarmed by its prevalence. Asbury's allusion to his indulgence in this respect, does not amount to a charge of drunkenness; it is at least ambiguous. His secession may have been the result of his honest though erring opinions; his "begging by way of subscription," was probably but a plan of supporting his independent charge at Forest Chapel, and not a novelty in those or later times. The scandalous reports against him may have been the natural incidents of his new party position and his eccentric character; his "vindication," if published, might have presented him in a very different light; his sudden death was a fate or providence which may befall the best of men, and has befallen one of the most eminent of Asbury's successors in the episcopal office. The facts of this case, as recorded, were indeed deplorable; but the record is sufficiently vague and uncertain to allow charity to dictate the judgment of history upon it.

About three months after the Conference of this year, Asbury, rejoicing over the increasing prosperity of the denomination, wrote to his old fellow-laborer, George Shadford, then in England, a letter which affords us some historical intimations of the times. "Long has been thy

absence," he says; "many, many have been the thoughts I have had about thee, and my trials and consolations in losing and gaining friends. We have about 14,000 members, between 70 and 80 traveling preachers, between 30 and 40 circuits. Four clergymen have behaved themselves friendly in attending Quarterly Meetings, and recommending us by word and letter. They are, Mr. Jarratt, in Virginia, as you know; Mr. Pettigrew, North Carolina; Dr. M'Gaw, Philadelphia; and Mogden, in East Jersey. You have heard of the divisions about that improper question proposed at Deer Creek Conference: 'What shall be done about the ordinances?' You know we stood foot by foot to oppose it. I cannot tell you what I suffered in this affair. However, God has brought good out of evil, and it has so cured them, that I think there will never be anything formidable in that way again. I hope if any preachers are to come over here at any future day you will be one. I admire the simplicity of our preachers. I do not think there has appeared another such a company of young devoted men. The Gospel has taken a universal spread. You have heard what great things God has done in the Peninsula, since about these eighteen months that I thought it most prudent to stay at Delaware. And an exceeding great work we have had there, and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. So that my labors were not in vain. Since I have been ranging through Virginia, toward the Alleghany, and Maryland, Pennsylvania and East and West Jerseys, and the Peninsula, I enjoy more health than I have for twenty years back. I travel 4,000 miles in a year, all weathers, among rich and poor, Dutch and English. O my dear Shadford, it would take a month to write out and speak what I want you to know. The most momentous is my constant communion with God as

my God; my glorious victory over the world and the devil. I am continually with God. I preach frequently, and with more enlargement of heart than ever. O America! America! it certainly will be the glory of the world for religion! I have loved, and do love America. I think it became necessary after the fall that Government should lose it. Your old national pride, as a people, has got a blow. You must abate a little. O let us haste in peace and holiness to the kingdom of peace and love, where we shall know, love, and enjoy God and each other, and all the differences in Church and State, and among private Christians, will be done away."[22]

As the next Conference approached he wrote to Wesley that he had been on Brunswick Circuit, "the oldest and best in Virginia." "Many faithful people," he adds, "joined us at our first coming here, having been convinced by the faithful preaching of our worthy friend Mr. Jarratt. I found the labors of those two men of God, James O'Kelly and Joseph Cromwell, had been blessed to the awakening and conversion of souls." Of North Carolina he says: "Here we have had some revival of religion and an ingathering of souls. The present preachers suffer much, being often obliged to dwell in dirty cabins, to sleep in poor beds, and, for retirement, to go into the woods; but we must suffer *with* if we labor *for* the poor. As to myself, I can say the Lord gives and wonderfully preserves my natural and spiritual health. My soul is daily fed, and I find abundant sweetness in God. Sometimes I am ready to say, 'He hath purified my heart,' but then again I fear. Upon the whole, I hope that I am more spiritual than ever I have

[22] This letter was sent to America by Rev. Joseph Entwisle, of the Wesleyan Conference, and published in a periodical, the name of which has escaped my memory.

been. I see the necessity of preaching a full and present salvation from all sin. You know, sir, it is not easy to rule, nor am I pleased with it. I bear it as my cross; yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me. O pray for me, that I may be filled with light and power, with zeal and prudence, and, above all, with humility."[23]

[23] March 20, 1784. Arm Mag., vol. ix, p. 681.

CHAPTER IX.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH —CONCLUDED.

Conferences of 1784 — Wesley's Counsels to the Preachers — Proceedings — First Obituary Notice — Methodism Crosses the Alleghanies — Mountaineer Local Preachers — The "Three Bishops" — Memorable Pioneers — Historical Importance of the Local Ministry — Sketches of Preachers — Isaac Smith — Wilson Lee — John Smith — William Jessup.

The Conference held two sessions in the year 1784, the first at Ellis's Preaching-house, Virginia, on the 30th of April, the second in Baltimore on the 25th of May.[1] An extraordinary session, forever memorable as the "Christmas Conference," was also held at the close of the year in Baltimore, but its momentous proceedings claim separate consideration. The two regular sessions are reported, as one Conference, in the official Minutes. Asbury alludes but briefly to the Virginia session. On the 29th of April he writes that he "rode to Ellis's Chapel, in Sussex County, where we held our Conference the two ensuing days. Brother O'Kelly gave us a good sermon: 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,' etc. Mr. Jarratt gave us a good discourse on 1 Tim. i, 4. Our business was conducted with uncommon love and unity. From this Conference I proceeded on and crossed James River, on my way to the North,

[1] The Minutes say it "ended" on the 28th. Asbury gives the date of its beginning.

and was led to cry to God to go with us and meet us there." He reached Baltimore on the 20th of May, after a ride of fifty miles, and on the 25th opened the second session. He gives it but four brief sentences in his Journal: "Our Conference began, all in peace. William Glendenning had been devising a plan to lay me aside, or at least to abridge my powers. Mr. Wesley's letter settled the point, and all was happy. The Conference rose on Friday morning." Young Thomas Ware was present. He says: "It was the first I attended. There was quite a number of preachers present. Although there were but few on whose heads time had begun to snow, yet several of them appeared to be way-worn and weather-beaten into premature old age. I doubt whether there ever has been a Conference among us in which an equal number could be found, in proportion to the whole, so dead to the world, and so gifted and enterprising as were present at that of 1784. They had much to suffer at that early period of our history, and especially during the Revolutionary struggle. Among these pioneers, Asbury, by common consent, stood first and chief. There was something in his person, his eye, his mien, and in the music of his voice, which interested all who saw and heard him. He possessed much natural wit, and was capable of the severest satire; but grace and good sense so far predominated that he never descended to anything beneath the dignity of a man and a Christian minister. In prayer he excelled." "He prayed," says Garrettson, "the best, and he prayed the most of any man I ever knew."

The letter, by which Asbury silenced the opposition of Glendenning, was addressed by Wesley to the Conference. It was dated the 3d of October, 1783, and admonished them "all to be determined to abide by the

Methodist doctrine and discipline, published in the four volumes of Sermons, and the Notes upon the New Testament, together with the Large Minutes of Conference. To beware of preachers coming from Great Britain or Ireland without a full recommendation from me; not to receive any preachers, however recommended, who will not be subject to the American Conference, and cheerfully conform to the Minutes both of the American and English Conferences, and not to receive any who make any difficulty on receiving Francis Asbury as the general assistant." "Undoubtedly," he adds, "the greatest danger to the work of God in America is likely to arise either from preachers coming from Europe, or from such as will arise from among yourselves speaking perverse things, or bringing in among you new doctrines, particularly Calvinism. You should guard against this with all possible care, for it is easier to keep them out than to thrust them out." It will presently be seen that the Conference conformed to these counsels in some of its measures.

The returns of members amounted to 14,988, showing an increase of 1,248. There were but 1,607 Methodists north of Mason and Dixon's line, and 13,381 south of it. There were eighty-four itinerant preachers, a gain of but two, though at least fifteen new laborers were received.[2] Thirteen, or nearly one sixth of the whole ministry of the preceding year, must, therefore, have retired from the ranks. Forty-six circuits were reported; their increase was seven.[3] Among the new ones were Long Island, N. Y., Redstone, and Juniata, Pa.

It was ordered at these sessions that subscriptions, for

[2] Lednum, p. 398. Lee says twelve, p. 86.

[3] Twice as many new names of circuits appear in the Minutes, but some are new names of old circuits; others represent divisions of old circuits. The numbers of circuits are seldom appreciable indications of the growth of the Church.

the erection or relief of chapels, should be made on all the circuits, the preachers to "insist that every member who is not supported by charity" should "give something;" that "the preachers should carefully avoid every superfluity in dress," and "speak frequently and faithfully against it in all the Societies;" that members who "buy and sell slaves," if "they buy with no other design than to hold them as slaves, and have been previously warned, shall be expelled, and be permitted to sell on no consideration;" and that "Local Preachers who will not emancipate their slaves in states where the laws admit," shall be called to account; those in Virginia "to be borne with another year," those in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey to be suspended; that "traveling preachers who now are or hereafter shall be possessed of slaves, and shall refuse to manumit them, where the laws permit," shall "be employed no more;" that, "for the reform of singing," "all preachers who have any knowledge of the notes of music should improve it by learning to sing too themselves, and should keep close to Mr. Wesley's tunes and hymns;" that, in accordance with Wesley's advice, if "European preachers" come "recommended by Mr. Wesley," and will "be subject to the American Conference, preach the doctrine taught in the four volumes of Sermons and Notes on the New Testament," and submit to Asbury's superintendence, they shall be received, "but if they walk contrary to the above directions, no ancient right or appointment shall prevent their being excluded from the connection." Asbury's "allowance," as general assistant, or superintendent, was fixed at twenty-four pounds ($60) per annum, "with his expenses for horses and traveling."[4]

[4] In about a fortnight after the Baltimore session, Asbury wrote to his parents in England, with whom he shared his small salary, "My allow-

For the first time the obituary question occurs in the Minutes, "What preachers have died this year?" The answer records two, their names only, William Wright and Henry Metcalf. Of the first we have but a slight trace; he was an Irishman, had traveled one year on Dorchester Circuit, died at his post, and was buried with a funeral sermon by Asbury. Lee says of Metcalf, "He was a man deeply rooted and grounded in the faith, and very much devoted to God." When dying he got out of his bed, and bowing down in prayer on the floor of his chamber, expired on his knees.

Four fasts were appointed, for each year, on every circuit, and the preachers were ordered to write on all class papers: "The first Friday after every Quarterly Meeting is to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer." The earliest historian of Methodism remarks that it was the custom of its people "to observe, formerly, all Fridays as days of fasting or abstinence."

Lee states that there was "a gracious revival this year in many of the frontier circuits, and the way was opening fast for us to enlarge our borders, to spread the Gospel through various places where we had never been before. The call of the people was great, for more laborers to be sent into the harvest." Some of the new circuits indicate this extension of Methodism on the frontiers. In the preceding year Jeremiah Lambert had charge of the Holston Circuit, with sixty members of Society, at the head waters of the Holston River; Henry Willis followed him there the present year. Redstone Circuit now appears, as the first organized form of the ministerial work

ance is twenty-four pounds currency, (about $60,) with my traveling expenses paid. I know not that I could call my one coat and waistcoat, and half a dozen shirts, two horses, and a few books, my own if my debts were paid."

of the denomination, beyond the Pennsylvania Alleghanies. Braddock's Road over the mountains had opened that ultramontane region, and emigration naturally took this prepared route. About three years before this Conference Methodism had crossed these mountains; but John Cooper and Samuel Breeze were now appointed to the first circuit in Western Pennsylvania;[5] and, before the year closed, Asbury scaled the Alleghanies for the first time, to counsel and encourage them. Poythress, Haw, Roberts, and others, who had been laboring for two or three years on the "Alleghany Circuit," had reached the Redstone region, and opened the new field for their itinerant successors.

Many Methodists had emigrated, during the war, to the mountains of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; and local preachers among them were the real founders of Methodism in these Alpine regions, as they were in so many other parts of the world.

As early as 1768, John Jones, of Maryland, built his cabin on Redstone Creek; Robert Wooster, a local preacher, was the first Methodist that he heard in those then remote regions. About 1781 Wooster seems to have been casually preaching there. Jones went ten miles to Beesontown or Uniontown, to hear him, was awakened under his first sermon, invited him to his own house, and was there converted while the humble lay evangelist was conducting family worship. Jones gave a son to the Western itineracy in the early part of the century and became a pillar in the Church at Uniontown, the first Methodist Society in Western Pennsylvania. We shall hereafter see that as early as 1788 the second Conference west of the Alleghanies, comprising seven members and five candidates, was held by Asbury in Uniontown.

[5] Lednum, p. 391.

Among the mountaineer local preachers, founders of the denomination in the wilderness, were William Shaw, Thomas Lakin, and John J. Jacob; they were all ordained by Asbury on the same day, and were familiarly known as "the three bishops," a title won by "their indefatigable labors."[6] Lakin was a native of Maryland, and a Methodist from the year 1780. A few years before the present Conference he emigrated beyond the Tuscarora Mountains, to Bedford County, Pa., and there became one of the frontier founders of the Church. He had superior talents as a preacher, he was diligent in visiting the sick and dying, and was a sort of chaplain of that distant region on funeral occasions and other public solemnities. He often mounted his horse and went preaching from appointment to appointment over a six weeks' circuit, and attended every Quarterly Meeting in his own and many on the neighboring circuits. In fine, this good man was a pioneer of religion on the frontier, doing more effective work than most regular preachers of later times. As population pressed westward he moved with it, and died at last, in Ohio, aged more than seventy years. He left a sanctified name in the Church.

John J. Jacob was also a native of Maryland, a brave and good man, at the age of twenty a lieutenant in the American army, and a hero in the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and Camden. He became a Methodist at Old Town, Md., in 1783. He refers to his conversion as attended by remarkable circumstances and "an indescribable ecstasy." "My whole frame," he adds, "especially my heart, seemed penetrated and wrapped in a flame of fire and love; and I think I felt like Peter, James, and John on the Mount." Of course his susceptible spirit rendered him one of the most zealous of the

[6] Lednum, p. 392.

"three bishops" of the mountains. He lived and preached in the rugged regions of Hampshire County, Va. He was "abundant in labors." "In the latter part of his life he gave up the world, and yielded his soul entirely to the service of his Saviour. It may be said that his life was full of benevolence, and that he lived only to glorify God. When he was nearing the heavenly country he took tender leave of his wife and children, saying, 'I shall soon meet Bishops Asbury and George. Now, Lord, receive me to thyself. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course.'"[7] He expired exclaiming, "All is well—safe!" in 1839, a veteran of more than eighty-two years.

Simon Cochrane was also a frontier pioneer of the local ministry. He was born in Harness Fort, in 1755, was a soldier in Dunmore's War, and also through the Revolutionary struggle. After eight years of military service, he joined the Methodists and devoted the remainder of his long life to "fighting the good fight of faith," a mountaineer champion of his Church, though always in its "local ranks." He began to preach in 1781. Asbury ordained him, and in the latter part of the century he emigrated to the wilderness of Kentucky, and thence, some years later, to Ohio, where, after sixty-four years of diligent ministerial labors, accompanied with the privations and perils of the frontier, he died in the faith, nearly ninety years old.

The Juniata Circuit, Pennsylvania, appears for the first time, this year, in the list of the appointments. It lay among the Tuscarora Mountains. As early as 1775, only about nine years after the epoch of American Methodism, Michael Cryder, a local preacher, penetrated to near the present town of Huntington, on the Juniata River,

[7] Lednum, p. 392.

built himself a mill, and labored diligently at his humble avocation, and as diligently to found Methodism among the scattered settlers of his wild and beautiful neighborhood. "From this Society Methodism was propagated through the valleys and hills of this part of Pennsylvania. Circuits and stations have been growing up from it for the last seventy-five or eighty years."[8] To the north-east of this mission field of Cryder lies Penn's Valley, "one of the most famous in the state." Robert Pennington, one of the earliest Methodists of Delaware, emigrated to this romantic region and settled in Center County, where he founded Methodism. He is honored among its people as "the first Methodist of this valley." He built a log chapel among the mountains, which is still familiarly known as "Father Pennington's Church." From this obscure source refreshing streams have gone forth through the whole valley; all the Methodism of that region dates from the labors of Robert Pennington.

The historian may well rescue such names from the oblivion which has been so rapidly obliterating them. Scores of other local preachers and laymen of those times, faithful and invincible pioneers of Methodism, westward and southward, men who not only labored before the itinerants arrived, and afterward with them, but provided them food and homes and "preaching houses," should be commemorated forever by the Church. It has, however, failed to record, not only their deeds, but, in most cases, even their names. It may suffice for them, but not for us, that their "record is on high." And the historical student, as, groping through the dim obscurities of our early annals, he ever and anon catches glimpses of extraordinary characters and great achievements, which, though they have left indelible impressions on the con-

[8] Lednum, p. 394.

dition of subsequent and grand commonwealths, still elude his attempts to recover their historical details, is compelled to close sadly his research with the conviction that the true history of American Methodism can never be written but in heaven. While recording the services of many truly great characters, he perceives that not a few greater men, men who led their van, must remain forever unknown on earth.

It may, in fine, be affirmed that not only was Methodism founded in the New World by local preachers—by Embury in New York, Webb in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Strawbridge in Maryland, Neal in Canada, Gilbert in the West Indies, and Black in Nova Scotia—but that nearly its whole frontier march, from the extreme north to the Gulf of Mexico, has been led on by these humble laborers; that in few things was the legislative wisdom of Wesley more signalized than in providing, in his ecclesiastical system, the offices of local preacher and class-leader, a species of lay pastorate which, alike in the dense communities of England, and the dispersed populations of America, has performed services which can hardly be overrated. The history of the denomination affords a lesson in this respect that should never be forgotten by Methodists while Christendom has a frontier any where on our planet. They have been accustomed to consider their "itinerancy" the pre-eminent fact of their history; they have demanded that all things should bend in subordination to this, and they have never exaggerated its importance; but they have failed to appreciate both the historical and prospective value of these humbler functions of their system. Most, if not all the itinerants we have thus far noticed, did inestimable service for the denomination as local preachers before they entered the itinerancy; most of them again became local preachers and labored on faithfully for the

common cause. Their intervals of "regular" service have secured them historical recognition; but hundreds of their "irregular" and hardly less useful colaborers have been forgotten.

Of the fifteen preachers received on trial at the Conference of 1784, a third retired from the itinerancy in less than three years; nearly another third in about five years; some of the remainder became men of renown by their faithful and successful services.

Isaac Smith's name is still a household word in Methodist families of the South. He was born in Virginia, in 1758. He served as a private, and later as an officer, in the Revolutionary War, sharing in many severe fights North and South. He was one of the gallant band that crossed the Delaware at night for Trenton. At Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, and Stony Point, he periled his life for his country, and he bore honorable scars to his grave. In 1783 he became a Methodist, and ever afterward was as devoted a "soldier of the Lord Jesus" as he had been of his country. In the same year Asbury sent him to preach on Norfolk Circuit, Va. The present year he was Jesse Lee's colleague on Salisbury Circuit, N. C. Two years later he formed the Edisto Circuit. "In this region," says one of our authorities, "the name Methodist was scarcely known until he visited it. The new name, and his heart-searching preaching, caused much stir among the people, as they had heard but little preaching before, and knew nothing of experimental religion. Many were convicted and converted, and a number of Societies were formed. It was no uncommon event for persons to fall under his pungent preaching as suddenly as if they had been shot. The doctrine of the new birth was no better understood by the people then than it was by Nicodemus, until

they were enlightened by his preaching. The pioneer of Methodism not only has to take people as he finds them, but the gold has to be worked out of the ore. When Mr. Smith was forming Edisto Circuit, a gentleman who was not a professor of religion invited him to his home. While at his house, his host observed that he frequently retired into the woods, and on one occasion followed him; when, to his great astonishment, he found him on his knees, engaged in fervent prayer. This struck him under conviction, and was the cause of his embracing religion soon after. The happy mixture of dignity, pleasantness, and meekness in his countenance was calculated to win the good opinion of such as beheld him. His appearance and his manners qualified him for the missionary work; and many of those whom he found dead in sin, and their tongues defiled with most profane language, he soon rejoiced to hear praising God. He, like most of his brethren that were engaged in planting Methodism, did not weary his congregations with dry and tedious discourses; but their sermons were short and energetic. They enforced their preaching with the most consistent deportment in the families where they sojourned, always praying with and for them, and speaking to each individual on the great matter of salvation. Such were our fathers."[9]

In 1790 he was appointed to Charleston, S. C., and in 1793 was presiding elder of almost the entire South Carolina Conference. In 1795 he superintended a still larger district. His labors were too great for his strength, and in 1796 he had to retire. But in 1820 he reappeared in the itinerant ranks. He extended his labors into Georgia, and was presiding elder there in 1821. When a veteran, full of years and honors, he devoted

[9] Lednum, p. 402.

himself to the Creek Indian Mission, "where," say his brethren, "he continued, a light in a dark place, till the infirmities of age compelled him to take a superannuated relation to his Conference in 1827."[10] "His labors among the Indians had been signally blessed, and his parting with them was a scene of uncommon tenderness. He left the nation in February, 1828, and arrived in safety on Pearl River, in Mississippi, some time in March Here he employed himself in preaching, and traveling, and doing good in various other ways, some two or three years. His two elder sons had now been providentially brought together in Macon, Ga., and they sent a united and urgent request to their aged parents to come and spend their remaining days with them. They accepted the invitation, and in due time the parents and the children were once more in the enjoyment of each others' society."[11] He was regarded now as the "father of the South Carolina Conference." Having long labored and suffered as an apostle, he was yet to be purified through some years in the fiery furnace of physical pain. He died of a cancer in 1834, "full of faith and the comfort of the Holy Ghost," after more than half a century of ministerial life, aged seventy-six years. "Amid all his sufferings, he continued to preach, until his strength absolutely failed him, and then his greatest pleasure seemed to be to commend the religion in which he found such ample support to the friends who came to visit him in his affliction. His dying scene was eminently serene and cheerful, worthy to crown the life he had lived." His Conference, recording his death, said: "He was one of the fathers of the Church in this country, and entitled to be had in everlasting remembrance. We cannot trust ourselves to speak fully of him. He was the

[10] Minutes, 1835. [11] Sprague's Annals, etc., vol. vii, p. 105.

oldest, and, what was well becoming the father of the Conference, the most honored and beloved of all the preachers. Believing every word of God, meek above the reach of provocation, and thoroughly imbued with the spirit of love and devotion, he was a saint indeed." His son writes: "I can truly say that I never knew him indulge in an expression, or in any way manifest a feeling unbecoming the character of a Christian. His faith in God was unbounded, and his conversation was habitually in heaven. From his conversion, or very soon after, he attained to the blessing of perfect love, and never lost the evidence. I watched him in early boyhood, as well as after I had reached maturity, and I can say, in the fear of God, that he was the most perfect model of Christian excellence I have ever seen; and if I had ever been tempted to doubt the truth of Christianity, I should have had no occasion, in meeting the temptation, to look beyond the daily tenor of his life. I well remember that a Jewish physician, with whom I studied medicine, was so much impressed with the holiness of my father's life as to remark one day, that if he could only hold on to his skirts at the Judgment he should feel safe; a strange expression indeed to come from a professed unbeliever in Jesus; but it will give you some idea of the confidence and veneration with which his Christian character was regarded. To the poor and destitute it was his delight to minister. His kitchen was thronged every Sabbath day by slaves from the neighboring plantations, who were sure to receive a liberal supply of food. Sometimes he would be called several miles from home to preach at the funeral of some poor old slave, who had left a dying request that 'old Master Smith' might perform that service for him. While he was especially considerate of the poor, and felt that his

message was peculiarly to them, he was always welcome in the houses of the opulent, and he felt it his duty to converse with them in respect to their immortal interests as freely and as faithfully as with those in the humblest walks of society. He had a strong affection for all who loved the Lord Jesus. Among his warmest friends were Presbyterians and Baptists; for both these denominations he often preached, and with the former he always communed when he had opportunity." At one period, about the year 1817, there was a disposition among the slaves in and about Camden to get up an insurrection. They afterward confessed that they were to have murdered all the white men except Isaac Smith, and him they intended to spare *that he might preach to them!* As a preacher he was very earnest in manner, and concise and energetic in language; and in his younger days his sermons produced very powerful effects, insomuch that many fell prostrate under them. He was of stout frame, and nearly six feet in height. The expression of his countenance combined great dignity with uncommon gentleness; and these qualities were reflected in his manners as well as in his face. In his old age he is said to have been surpassingly venerable and lovely. His silver locks, and face beaming with good-will, together with an almost unearthly air and manner, rendered him an object of great interest wherever he was; and he left an impression, even upon those who only saw him casually, that was little likely ever to be effaced. It is said his most remarkable characteristic, and that which gave to his preaching its greatest power, was his elevated piety, and especially his habit of intimate communion with God. In the year 1786, while riding upon the banks of the Santee, he felt the need of a deeper consecration to God; and, dismounting from his horse in a grove beside the

river, he had a season of wrestling with God in prayer, and from that time the assurance of God's love toward him never forsook him for an hour. After remaining an hour upon his knees, he would come from his closet with his face fairly glowing with a heavenly light. It was in his house that Bishop Capers, then a boy, recently converted, began to pray in the presence of others. In relating the fact in his autobiography, the bishop says: "It was that Brother Smith whose praise was in all the Churches, and whose memory is still precious, as one of the purest and best of Methodist preachers." "When he died, there were found upon his knees formations, evidently occasioned by his having spent so much time in a kneeling posture." His fellow-citizens of Camden had his portrait painted, and hung in the town hall. In fine, this good man preached louder by his example than by his voice. He was the St. John of the early Methodist apostolate.

Wilson Lee was one of the most zealous, laborious, and successful Methodist preachers of his times. Many stars bestud his crown of rejoicing in heaven. He was born in Sussex County, Del., in 1761, and entered the traveling ministry in 1784. The scene of his first year's labors was the Alleghany Circuit, among the mountains of the Alleghany ridge. The ensuing two years he traveled respectively the Redstone (Pa.) and Talbot (Md.) Circuits. In 1787 he penetrated to what was then the wilderness of the West, and labored on the Kentucky Circuit, where we shall hereafter meet him. He continued to travel in Kentucky and Tennessee during the next six years, laboring night and day, suffering great privations, and encountering the severest hardships. "It may be truly said," remark his co-laborers,[12] "that Wilson Lee

[12] Minutes, 1805.

hazarded his life upon all the frontier stations he filled, from the Monongahela to the banks of the Ohio, Kentucky, Salt River, Green River, Great Barrens, and Cumberland River, in which stations there were savage cruelty and frequent deaths. He had to ride from station to station, and from fort to fort, sometimes with and at other times without a guard, as the inhabitants at those places and periods can witness." He left the West with a shattered constitution in 1793, and traveled the Salem (N. J.) Circuit. He still panted, however, for the harder and more adventurous labors of the new fields into which Methodism was bearing its ensign; we accordingly find him, the next year, in New England, traveling New London Circuit, as colleague of Enoch Mudge, David Abbott, and Zadok Priest. Mudge, the first native Methodist preacher of New England, says: "Wilson Lee was my senior on this circuit, but, owing to ill-health, was unable to fill all his appointments. He was distinguished for shrewdness, piety, and correctness in his deportment. His penetrating eye saw the proper thing to be done, and when and how to do it. His administration of discipline was prompt and prudent. His zeal was unbounded, and he would not rest while it was possible for him to stir. When unable to be abroad he would have class and prayer-meetings at his lodgings. He was truly a *revival* preacher; his public discourses were full of rich experience, wholesome doctrine, pointed remarks, and practical theology."[13] We shall hereafter have occasion to trace more fully his labors in the East.

He was compelled, by his declining health, to seek a more genial climate. He left, however, a trail of light behind him in New England. He was appointed to New York city in 1795; the three subsequent years he labored

[13] Letter to the Author.

in Philadelphia. In 1799 he traveled Montgomery (Md.) Circuit; the next year he was supernumerary, and during the ensuing three superintended the Baltimore District. In 1804 he was returned as superannuated, and departed to his final rest, the same year, in Arundel County, Md. He was taken, while praying with a sick person, with a copious discharge of blood from his lungs. A bloodvessel of some magnitude was supposed to break, so that he was suffocated in a few minutes. He had distinguished himself by his administrative powers as a Presiding Elder, as well as his overpowering abilities as a Preacher, and his personal qualities as a Christian. "He was neat in dress," say the old Minutes, "affable in his manners, fervent in his spirit, energetic in his ministry, and his discourses were fitted to the character of his hearers. His constitution was very slender, but zeal for the Lord would urge him on to surprising constancy and great labors."[14] "After full trial he has immortalized," says the same record, "his ministerial, Christian, and itinerant character." Jesse Lee writes that "he professed to be a witness of the perfect love of God for many years before he died; that he was a very animated speaker, and spared no pains in trying to bring souls to God; that in private conversation he was cheerful and solemn; and that he had a good talent in taking care of the Church of God. A few months before he died, when he was so low that he could not speak louder than his breath, he said to me with great solemnity, 'I have given up the world; I have given up the Church; I have given up all.'"[15]

John Smith was a native of Maryland; he became a Methodist in 1780, and, entering the itinerancy at this Conference, labored faithfully, notwithstanding the in-

[14] Minutes of 1805 [15] Lee's History, etc., p. 307.

firmities of a feeble constitution, for ten or twelve years, a part of the time beyond the Alleghanies, in the Redstone region. He died in 1812, aged fifty-four, in Chestertown, Md., and rests at "Hinson's Chapel, near the great and good William Gill."[16] His death was remarkably triumphant: "Come, Lord Jesus," he exclaimed, "come quickly and take my enraptured soul away. I am not afraid to die. I long to be dissolved, and see my Saviour without a dimming vail between. Death has lost its sting."

William Jessup, a native of Delaware, began his itinerant career under great difficulties, pursued it with unyielding courage, and ended it with a death of triumph. He joined the Methodists about the year 1779, in Sussex County, Del. His father "was an ungodly man, and opposed his son in becoming a Methodist and in serving God. He suffered him to go to meeting on the Sabbath-day in no better clothes than he allowed his negroes; this he did to keep him away from meetings; but, however coarse or ragged his apparel, he was found worshiping regularly among the Methodists. When he began to itinerate, his father, though a large landholder, refused him a horse and suitable clothes to appear in public. His brethren, who believed God had called him to the work, gave him his outfit." "Few such holy, steady men have been found among us," says Asbury. He traveled about eleven years in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and Nova Scotia; and died in Pennsylvania in 1795, shouting with his expiring breath, "My work is done! Glory! glory! glory!" He was buried at good Martin Boehm's chapel, in Lancaster County. Such heroes should never be forgotten; but their brief introduction, thus far, has not been designed as a mere

[16] Lednum, p. 402.

tribute to their personal merit; it is preparatory for the reappearance of most of them in important future scenes.

We have thus repeatedly passed over the present period of our narrative, gleaning and adjusting, into what orderly arrangement has been possible, the scattered fragments of the history of these obscure times. Again we are brought to the epoch of Asbury's interview with Coke at Barrett's Chapel, the epoch of events which were to give a new and formal development to American Methodism. Hitherto its progress has been but preliminary; hereafter it takes a more historic shape. From gathering the broken materials of its annals, dispersed over an indefinite field, we come now to witness the spectacle of the laying of the broad and permanent foundations of its ecclesiastic and historic structure. We shall see its walls rise in massive strength, and, entering its gates, shall find ourselves walking symmetrical streets, not only in a suburb, but in a citadel of the "city of God." If not perfect, if here and there marred by marks of both internal and external combat, yet shall we find it not altogether unworthy of the vision, of the *civitas Dei*, which illuminated the studious vigils of Augustine, and continues to illuminate the hopes of Christendom.

BOOK III.

ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Dr. Thomas Coke — His early Life — He is "chimed" out of his Church — Joins Wesley — Importance of his Services — Sketch of Thomas Vasey — He sacrifices a Fortune for Methodism — His Services — Richard Whatcoat — His Appearance and Character — His early History — His Labors and Sufferings in Ireland — Necessity of Wesley's Measures for America — Condition of American Methodism — Condition of the Protestant Episcopal Church — Wesley solicits Ordinations from the Bishop of London for America. — Fletcher's Interest for America — Rankin's Interview with him — Wesley's Consultation with Coke — The Ordinations at Bristol — Wesley's Opinion on Church Polity — Voyage of Coke and his Companions to America — Their Arrival at New York — At Philadelphia — At Dover — At Barrett's Chapel.

In the year 1776, while pursuing his daily travels and ministrations in Somersetshire, England, John Wesley was saluted by a clergyman, who had come twenty miles to meet him. "I had much conversation with him," says Wesley, "and a union was begun then which, I trust, shall never end."[1] The stranger was Thomas Coke, LL.D., a man who was destined to become a chief character in the history of Methodism in both hemispheres.

[1] Wesley's Journals, Works, vol. iv. Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii.

Thomas Coke was born in 1747, at Brecon, a pictur esque town of Wales. His father is commemorated, in the chancel of the ancient Priory church of the town, for his extraordinary benevolence and hospitality, and his services as "chief magistrate of the borough," a function which he administered "with universal approbation."[2]

The only child of a wealthy house, Thomas Coke began early his education for one of the learned professions. In his seventeenth year he entered Jesus College, Oxford, as a Gentleman Commoner. He there chose the Church as the future sphere of his life; but he did not escape the infection of the speculative infidelity then prevalent in the English universities. Sherlock and other writers rescued him from doubt, but failed to teach him genuine personal religion. He entered upon his office as incumbent of South Petherton Parish, Somersetshire, an unregenerate man, but a conscientious inquirer. An interview with Thomas Maxfield, Wesley's first lay itinerant, afforded him better views of evangelical Christianity. Visiting a family in Devonshire, he found among its laborers an untutored but intelligent Methodist, a Class-leader of the rustics of the neighborhood. He sought this good man's conversation, and was surprised at his knowledge of divine truth. The nature of faith, justification, regeneration, and the evidences which attend them—the "unsearchable riches of Christ"—were themes upon which the clergyman found he could be instructed by the unlettered peasant. They not only conversed but prayed together. The educated divine obtained from the lay Methodist his best knowledge on the profoundest subjects, and acknowledged that he owed to him greater obligations, "with respect to the means of finding peace

[2] Etheridge's Life of Coke, chap. 1.

with God and tranquillity of mind, than to any other person."[3]

His increased earnestness now surprised his parishioners; his church was crowded; its vestry declined to erect in it a gallery for the accommodation of the throng, but he had it put up at his own expense; he preached no longer with notes; he held numerous evening meetings in distant parts of his parish, introduced the singing of hymns, and testified to his people his personal experience of "the forgiveness of sins," attained while preaching at one of his neighboring appointments, where his "heart," he says, "was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory." A clamor was raised against him as "a Methodist," though he had yet no relations whatever with Wesley, or any of his Societies. His bishop admonished him; his rector dismissed him; mobs of his own parishioners menaced him; he was "chimed" out of his church; but on the two ensuing Sundays he took his stand in the street, near the church door, and preached with power Stones had been collected in heaps for an assault upon him, but he was protected by some of his pious people. He was compelled to abandon his parish. On the day he departed the bells were merrily rung, and the mob was treated with hogsheads of cider. Petherton celebrated as a jubilee its deliverance from a Methodist curate; but it gave to the world a man who was to rank second only to Wesley in the history of Methodism, and to be the first Protestant bishop of the new world. In later years the Petherton bells were to ring again for him as he flew over the country, one of its greatest evangelists, ring for him a hearty welcome to his old pulpit.

It has been remarked that Coke's appearance in the

[3] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii, 186.

Methodist movement, at this time, was one of those noteworthy providences which mark its early history. Wesley, advanced in years, had hoped that Fletcher might be his successor in his great work, but the saintly vicar of Madeley was fast declining in health, and was to precede him in the grave. Coke was thrust out of Pethertón, and found refuge in the Wesleyan Conference at the opportune moment. Wesley needed now a practical, an energetic, an administrative coadjutor. He had himself legislated and matured the disciplinary system of Methodism, Whitefield had stirred the conscience of England and America for it, Fletcher had settled its theology, Charles Wesley had provided for it a psalmody which was to become its virtual liturgy throughout the world. The field of Wesley's operations and responsibilities had enlarged beyond his expectations and his powers; Methodism had already extended to foreign lands, and the time had come for grand foreign plans; the American Revolution was preparing the way for an American organization of the denomination. Coke now appeared by the side of the great but aged founder as the providentially commissioned man for the times. In travel and preaching he became as indefatigable as Wesley or Whitefield. He was to traverse continually the United Kingdom, the United States, and the West Indies. He was to have virtual charge, for years, of the Irish Conference, presiding at its sessions oftener than Wesley himself. He was to win the title of the "Foreign Minister of Methodism." He was to cross the Atlantic eighteen times, defraying himself his expenses; to organize, under Wesley, the Methodist Episcopal Church, as its first bishop; to originate the constitutional organization of English Methodism by Wesley's Deed of Declaration; to found the Wesleyan Missions in the West

Indies, in Africa, in Asia, in England, Wales, and Ireland; to represent, in his own person, down to his death, the whole missionary operations of Methodism, as their official and almost their sole director; lavishing upon them his affluent fortune, and giving more money to religion than any other Methodist, if not any other Protestant of his times. Dying at last, a veteran of nearly seventy years, a missionary himself, on his way to the East, he was to be buried beneath the waves of the Indian Ocean, "the greatest man of the last century," says Asbury, "in labors and services as a minister of Christ." Like most, if not all, great men, he had peculiar faults, as we shall have occasion to see; but they hardly mar the noble proportions of his character.

Such was the man that Wesley was now to send to America to introduce a new era in its struggling Methodism. He was to go as a "superintendent" or Bishop, and to be accompanied by two assistants, as Elders, that he might thus conform, in his ordinations, to the usage of the English Church, which required in that solemnity the co-operation of at least two presbyters with the bishop. These assistants were Thomas Vasey and Richard Whatcoat.

Thomas Vasey was early left an orphan. A wealthy uncle, who was a rigid churchman, adopted him as the heir of his property. His conversion among the Methodists excited the indignation of his rich patron, and he was threatened with the loss of all his expected inheritance if he should join any of Wesley's Societies. He obeyed his conscience, and, sacrificing wealth and ease and kindred, submitted in 1775 to the hardships of the Methodist itinerancy. He had traveled about nine years when Wesley ordained him as one of Coke's presbyters. He labored in America about two years. It appears that

he was induced to accept reordination from Bishop White, of Philadelphia, but Wesley's liberalized views of Church polity enabled him to receive the returned missionary without severe animadversion on this caprice. It was Wesley's policy to keep his British Societies in union with the national Church, and to promote the appointment of his most able preachers to parishes in the Establishment, that the Methodists might have, without embarrassments, the holy sacraments. He encouraged Vasey, therefore, to accept a curacy. The latter was content with his new position only two or three years, and in 1789 re-entered the itinerancy, "in which, with much zeal and success, he persevered during the twenty-two following years."[4] From 1811 to 1826 he was retained, by the Conference, at City Road Chapel, London, where he performed the liturgical services regularly as enjoined by the will of Wesley, and, as an ordained clergyman, afforded important assistance to the Metropolitan Societies generally. He was at last recognized as a patriarch among the London Methodists, having labored till the eighty-fourth year of his age and the fifty-first of his ministry. Bending under infirmities, he retired, in 1826, to die in Leeds, a place sacred in Methodist history, not only for its missionary reminiscences and the agency of its Conferences in American Methodism, but for the primitive piety of its Societies. He found there a congenial sanctuary in its "Select Bands," an early institution, which had always been his delight, and which he deemed the best school for instruction in "the deep things of God." He attended them constantly, and ripened fast for heaven. During his residence in Leeds, says the Conference, "his Christian simplicity, his pious conversation, and his fervency and dili-

[4] Minutes of the British Conf., 1827.

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gence in prayer were highly observable and exemplary. For a considerable time previous to his death nearly one third of his time appeared to be spent in prayer." He died suddenly on the 27th of December, 1826. He rose in the morning as well as usual, but in a few hours was seized with a convulsion, and expired instantly.[5]

Richard Whatcoat was one of the saintliest men in the primitive itinerancy of Methodism. Had he been a Papist, he might have been canonized. One of his American cotemporaries says that "his personal appearance" was "genteel and grave, his soul comprehensive, vigorous, noble, great, active;" his "presence and aspect pleasant, yet solemn, often striking with reverence and awe such as looked upon him, especially when he was exercising the offices of his position."[6] The biographer adds that it might be said of him, as of St. Basil, "that so much divine majesty and luster appeared in him, it made the wicked tremble to behold him." "In him were seen majesty and love. His whole deportment was beautiful, and adorned with personal graces. His amiable, heavenly, and courteous carriage was such as to make him the delight of his acquaintances. He was a man of fortitude; he appeared to fear no danger when duty was plain, (as his labors and troubles showed,) believing that he who walks uprightly walks safely, though he pass 'through the valley and shadow of death.'" "He feared not the face of man, but where there was just occasion he would boldly admonish and faithfully reprove, yet with so much prudence, and with such expressions of tenderness, as made way to the heart, and rendered his work successful in winning souls to his

[5] Wes. Meth. Mag., 1827, p. 142.

[6] Dr. Phœbus's "Mems. of Rev. Richard Whatcoat, late bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church; p. 58. New York, 1828."

heavenly Master." "His spirit was serious, his gesture reverent, his words well suited, well weighed, pithy, solid, and expressive. His deportment was such, as if at every moment he saw Christ, and had God's law, his own conscience, and covenant with the Holy Spirit, and the day of judgment before his eyes." "When he awoke in the night he was in meditation or prayer, exulting and praising God, like Paul and Silas, speaking to himself in spiritual songs, making melody in his heart with grace. This holy man was sent to the Church as if an example, to show to what a life of peace and holiness Christians may attain on earth."

He was born on the 23d of February, 1736, in the parish of Quinton, Gloucestershire, England. His remarkably devout character is doubtless attributable, in some measure, to his pious parentage and strict early education. "I believe," he says, "that my mother walked in the form and enjoyed the power of godliness more than thirty years, and died in the triumph of faith." "From the earliest period I can remember," he adds, "I had the fear of God, so as to keep me from the gross sins of the age; but in July, 1758, when I was about twenty-one years and five months old, I attended Methodist preaching regularly, and soon found the word was made light and power to my soul; for when the preacher was describing the fall of man, I thought he spoke as if he had known everything that was in my heart. When he described the nature of faith, I was conscious I had it not; and though I believed all the Scriptures to be of God, yet I had not the marks of a Christian believer; and I was convinced that if I died in the state wherein I then was, I should be miserable forever. Yet I could not conceive how I, that had lived so sober a life, could be the chief of sinners. But this was not long; for I no

sooner discovered the spirituality of the law, and the enmity that was in my heart against God, than I could heartily agree to it. The thoughts of death and judgment now struck me with terrible fear. In this state I was when one told me, 'I know God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven all my past sins, that the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' This gave me great encouragement, and I determined never to rest until I had a testimony in myself that my sins also were forgiven. But in the mean time such was the darkness I was in, such my consciousness of guilt, and the just displeasure of the almighty God, that I could find no rest, day or night, either for body or soul, so that life was a burden, and I became regardless of all things under the sun. On the 3d of September, 1758, being overwhelmed with guilt and fear, as I was reading, it was as if one whispered to me, 'Thou hadst better read no more, for the more thou readest the more thou wilt know; and he that knoweth his Lord's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' I paused a little, and then resolved, Let the consequences be what they may, I will proceed. When I came to those words, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,' I fixed my eyes upon them, and in a moment my darkness was removed, and the Spirit bore witness with my spirit that I was a child of God. In the same instant I was filled with unspeakable peace and joy in believing; all fear of death, judgment, and hell suddenly vanished. Before this I was kept awake by anguish and fear, so that I could not get an hour's sound sleep in a night. Now I wanted no sleep, being abundantly refreshed by contemplating the rich display of God's mercy in adopting so unworthy a creature as me to be an heir of the kingdom of heaven."

But he could not be content. He aspired to the highest consecration possible to the soul of man. "Yet I soon found," he writes, "that though I was justified freely I was not wholly sanctified. This brought me into a deep concern, and confirmed my resolution, to admit of no peace nor truce with the evils which I still found in my heart. I was sensible both that they hindered me at present in my holy exercises, and that I could not enter into the joy of my Lord unless they were all rooted out. These considerations led me to consider more attentively the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we may escape the corruption that is in the world, and be made partakers of the divine nature. I was much confirmed in my hope of their accomplishment by frequently hearing Mr. Mather speak freely upon the subject. I saw it was the mere gift of God, and, consequently, to be received by faith. And after many sharp and painful conflicts, and many gracious visitations also, on the 28th of March, 1761, my soul was drawn out and engaged in a manner it never was before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love. Now all was love and prayer and praise. And in this happy state, 'rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks,' I continued for some years with little intermission or abatement, wanting nothing for soul or body more than I received from day to day."

During eight or nine years he labored humbly but effectively as a Band and Class-leader in Wednesbury, Staffordshire, where, as we have seen, Methodism was "tried as by fire" in terrible persecutions. In 1767 he began to hold public meetings, as an Exhorter, in rural neighborhoods. In 1769 the devoted John Pawson, who knew how to estimate his character, proposed him as a

candidate at the memorable Leeds Conference, which sent the first Methodist missionaries, Boardman and Pilmoor, to America. The Conference might well have received their obscure young probationer with peculiar interest, could they have anticipated that he was providentially destined to follow their missionaries, and become one of the early bishops of the wide-spread Church they had thus been humbly founding in the distant West.

After traveling two years in England he was sent to Ireland. Before his departure he went home to take a last leave of his "dear old mother, dying with dropsy." "I stayed with her," he writes, "a fortnight, and then took my final farewell, until we should meet where parting is no more; she knew and loved the work I was engaged in, and therefore gave me up willingly. She lived a few weeks later, and then died in the faith." In Ireland he traveled an eight weeks' circuit, preaching twice or thrice daily, "meeting the Societies," "visiting the sick," and suffering severe hardships in the cabins of the common people. Nearly three hundred souls were gathered into the classes of his circuit the first year. In the second he was prostrated by his excessive labors, and disease. "I was taken," he says, "with an entire loss of appetite, a violent bleeding at the nose, and profuse night-sweats, so that my flesh was consumed from my bones, and my eyes sunk in my head. My sight also failed me, so that I could not distinguish my most intimate acquaintance at the breadth of a room. I was confined by this affliction twelve weeks; for some time I could not set my feet to the ground. But my mind being upon my work, I little regarded the pain of my body so long as I was able to sit on my horse, or stand and speak to the people." His life was despaired of, but he

improved, and in 1773 was sent to travel among the mountains of Wales, where he continued two years. The remainder of his services, down to the time of his departure to America, were on various circuits in England. Shadford, who well knew the wants of the American Church, urged him to go with Coke; he hesitated, and observed a day of fasting and prayer for divine guidance. At last "my mind," he says, "was drawn to meditate on the subject; the power of God came upon me, and my heart was remarkably melted with love to God and man." He offered himself to be sacrificed, if need be, for his distant brethren. His name will often recur in our pages, and always to command our reverence.

These were the men whom Wesley selected to share with him the grave responsibility he was now about to assume, of organizing the "Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America." We have seen the necessity of this momentous measure. Methodism had extended greatly in the new world. It was the only form of religion that had thrived there during the Revolution. It now comprised more than eighty traveling preachers, besides many local preachers, hundreds of class-leaders and exhorters, thousands of members, and tens of thousands of regular hearers. It possessed chapels in most of the principal communities of the middle states, and in many of the rural towns. It was rapidly extending its net-work of ministerial plans over the land. Its members could not be called "communicants," for they had not the sacraments. It received its converts into its Churches without baptism, in many places, and the children of its families[7] were growing up without

[7] We shall soon see that Coke, immediately after his arrival, baptized not only hundreds but "thousands."

that holy rite, except where the brief measures of the Fluvanna Conference had provided it. It was a Church without a sacramental altar, though as pure and valid as any then on the American continent. Its early but precarious dependence upon the English clergy for the sacraments had almost entirely failed since the outbreak of the Revolution. The colonial English Church had been generally disabled, if not extinguished; its clergy fleeing the country, or entering political or military life. Virginia had been the center of its American strength, but it had then quite fallen away. At the Declaration of Independence it included not more than a third of the people of that province. When the war began the sixty-one counties of Virginia contained ninety-five parishes, one hundred and sixty-four churches, and ninety-one clergymen. At the conclusion of the contest many of her churches were in ruins, nearly a fourth of her parishes "extinct or forsaken," and thirty-four of the remaining seventy-two were without pastoral supplies; twenty-eight only of her ninety-one clergymen remained, and these with an addition, soon after the war, of eight from other parts of the country, ministered in but thirty-six parishes. In the year in which Wesley ordained an American Methodist bishop, "memorials" to the Virginia legislature for the incorporation of the "Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia," and for other advantages to religion, were met by counter petitions that "no step might be taken in aid of religion, but that it might be left to its own superior and successful influence." The memorials were postponed till the next session, and then rejected; but a bill for the "incorporation of all religious societies which may apply for the same," was adopted. In other parts of the country the English Church never had been numerically strong, and its ex-

istence was now precarious, except in two or three large cities.[8]

It was in these circumstances that a majority, as has been shown, of the American itinerants, representing a majority of their circuits and people, attempted to provide the sacraments by the measures of the Fluvanna Conference of 1779, after years of compromise and delay. The temporary rupture of that year was healed by a further compromise and delay in 1780, till the counsel of Wesley could be obtained. The letters which Wesley received convinced him that something must be done, however extraordinary, for the relief of the distant and suffering societies. He endeavored, nevertheless, to avert the necessity of "irregular" measures. Four years before the ordination of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey, he addressed two letters to Lowth, Bishop of London, entreating the ordination of at least one Presbyter to administer the sacraments among the American Methodists. "I mourn," he wrote, "for poor America; for the sheep scattered up and down therein; a part of them have no shepherds at all, and the care of the rest is little better, for their shepherds pity them not."[9] Lowth declined his request. Wesley turned now to his own chief counselors, among whom were Coke, and Fletcher of Madeley. The latter had long sympathized with his American brethren, and had thought of crossing the Atlantic, and of laboring and dying among them; but his declining health forbade him. Rankin, on his return to England,

[8] See History of the Religious Movement, etc., vol. ii, book v, chaps. 6, 7, where I have endeavored to treat exhaustively the whole question of Wesley's measures and intentions respecting American Methodism. For the statistical statements of the text, compare Dr. Hawks's Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America, i, 10, and Journals of the Virginia Assembly, 1784.

[9] Wesley's Works, vol. vii, p. 231.

met him near Bristol. "His looks, his salutation, and his address," says Rankin, "struck me with a mixture of wonder, solemnity, and joy." They walked in a garden for retired conversation. Fletcher eagerly inquired respecting the condition of the American Societies. While Rankin was describing it, the saintly vicar "stopped him six times," under the shade of the trees, and broke out with prayer to God for the prosperity of the American brethren. "He appeared," says Rankin, "to be as deeply interested in behalf of our suffering friends as if they had been his own flock at Madeley. He several times called upon me, also, to commend them to God in prayer. This was an hour never to be forgotten by me while memory remains." [10]

In the year 1784 the Leeds Conference was again to be rendered memorable by its interest for America. Fletcher was there, and with his counsels the American question was brought to an issue.[11] Wesley had already discussed it with Coke, representing to him the actual circumstances of the transatlantic Societies, their new relation and that of their country to the British Church and State; and the providential necessity that seemed to devolve upon him, as leader of the Methodistic movement, to venture on the extraordinary measure of ordaining men to supply them with the sacraments. He cited the example of the ancient Alexandrian Church, which through two hundred years provided its bishops through ordination by its presbyters. Coke was already an ordained presbyter of the Church of England; Wesley now proposed to ordain him a bishop under the unpretentious, but synonymous title of "superintendent," and to send him to the relief of the American Method-

[10] Benson's Fletcher, chap. vii.
[11] Etheridge's Coke, pp. 162, 163.

ists.[12] Coke required time to consider a proposal so momentous; after about two months he wrote to Wesley, acceding to it, though still suggesting delay, or, if possible, some modification of the plan. Wesley summoned him, with Rev. James Creighton, a presbyter of the Establishment, to meet him and Whatcoat and Vasey at Bristol, and there, on the first day of September, 1784, assisted (according to the custom of the English Church[13]) by the two presbyters, Creighton and Coke, Wesley ordained Vasey and Whatcoat deacons, and on the next day ordained them elders or presbyters. On the latter day he also ordained Thomas Coke superintendent or bishop of the Methodist Societies in America. By this solemn measure American Methodism was to take precedence of the Colonial Episcopal Church in the dates of their reorganization after the Revolution. The Methodist bishops were the first Protestant bishops, and Methodism was the first Protestant Episcopal Church of the New World; and as Wesley had given it the Anglican Articles of Religion, (omitting the seventeenth, on predestination,) and the Liturgy, wisely abridged, it became, both by its precedent organization and its subsequent numerical importance, the real successor to the Anglican Church in America.[14]

This great measure was not only dignified by solemn forms and justified by providential necessity, but Wesley

[12] The first consultation was in Wesley's study at City Road Chapel, London. Etheridge's Coke, p. 100. On Coke's hesitancy, see his letter in Etheridge, p. 101.

[13] Whatcoat in his Journal (Phœbus's Life of Whatcoat, p. 17) says: "September 1, 1784, Rev. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England, formed a presbytery and ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey deacons. And on September 2d, by the same hands, etc., Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were ordained elders, and Thomas Coke, LL.D., was ordained superintendent for the Church of God under our care in North America."

[14] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii, p. 215.

had been providentially prepared for it. It has sometimes been attributed, by the opponents of Methodism, to the imbecility of his old age, and the ambitious influence of the men who were immediately concerned in it. No man who has studied the progress of Wesley's opinions, as shown in his minute autobiographical records, can doubt that it was the legitimate result of his matured judgment. He says, expressly, that it was "a step which he had long weighed in his mind."[15] He had begun his public career as a "bigoted high Churchman." His brother Charles still retained his original prelatical prejudices, and therefore was excluded from his consultations in this transaction. But Wesley himself had long since outgrown the Churchly errors of his education. Nearly forty years prior to these ordinations he had read Lord King's "Primitive Church," and renounced the opinion that there was any essential distinction of "order" between bishops and presbyters. Fifteen years later he denied the necessity, though not the expediency, of episcopal ordination. Stillingfleet had proved to him that it is "an entire mistake that none but episcopal ordination is valid." Nearly thirty years before the ordinations at Bristol he renounced all other regard for systems of Church government than that of scriptural expediency. "As for my own judgment," he wrote in 1756, "I still believe 'the episcopal form of Church government to be scriptural and apostolical;' I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles; but that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicum.' I think he has unanswerably proved that 'neither Christ nor his apostles prescribe any

[15] Journals, *anno* 1784.

particular form of Church government, and that the plea of divine right for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.'" [16] Twenty-nine years before the appointment of Coke and his companions Wesley had asserted, in his Notes on the New Testament, the scriptural identity of bishops and presbyters. "I firmly believe," he at last said, "that I am a scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England, for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove." [17]

In accordance with these opinions, Wesley, at various times, ordained some of his other itinerants, some for Scotland, some for the West Indies, and at last some for England also. At least a score of them were thus, at intervals, solemnly authorized to administer the sacraments.

The little band, charged with their great mission, now prepared to embark. "As we passed through our Societies, from Leeds to London and Bristol," says Whatcoat, "our friends showed us many kindnesses, so that nothing was wanting to make our voyage as comfortable as the nature of things would admit." They set sail at ten o'clock on the morning of the 18th of September.[18] Storms immediately assail them. After about a week they are still struggling with tempests between the coasts of England and France, doubtful whether they shall not be compelled to take refuge in the port of Brest. Better auspices dawn at last, and they hasten on their destined course. Coke finds "one peculiar blessing, a place of retirement, a little secret corner in the

[16] Letter to Clarke, Works, vii, p. 284.

[17] "On the Church," Works, vii, p. 312.

[18] The date given by Coke. "Extracts of the Journal of the Rev. Dr. Coke's five visits to America," p. 7. London, 1793. Dr. Phœbus's Life of Whatcoat says "Sept. 28," a typographical error, copied by Sandford in "Wesley's Missionaries to America," etc.

ship" which he calls "his study." "It is so small," he adds, "that I have hardly room to roll about; but there is a window in it which opens to the sea, and makes it the most delightful place under deck. Here, God willing, I shall spend the greatest part of my time." He entertains himself there with books and prayer. He reads the life of Xavier, and exclaims, "O for a soul like his! But, glory be to God! there is nothing impossible with him. I want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the East and the West, the North and the South." Brainerd's life is his fitting counterpart to Xavier. "O that I may follow him," he writes, "as he followed Christ!" The "Confessional;" Hoadley on "Conformity and Episcopacy;" but, above all, except his Greek Testament, Augustine's "Meditations" are his delight. He fails not also to relieve the monotony of the voyage by indulging his scholarly tastes with the Pastorals of Virgil, which, "notwithstanding their many exceptional passages, by a kind of magic power convey me," he says, "to fields and groves and purling brooks, and paint before my eyes all the feigned beauties of Arcadia, and would almost persuade me that it is possible to be happy without God. However, they serve now and then to unbend the mind." He usually spends two evening hours a day reading with his colleagues, the captain and his son and mate sometimes listening with interest. He, or one of his colleagues, reads prayers daily, and preaches on Sundays. They observe Fridays with fasting and prayer. On the 22d of October they are visited by a sparrow, which "informs them that they are not a great way from land; it probably came from Newfoundland." Eleven days are yet to elapse, however, before they reach their destined port. At last, on Wednesday, the 3d of

November, they land at New York, after a voyage of more than six weeks, in which, says Whatcoat, "according to the sailors' measure, we sailed over four thousand miles."

They were conducted to the house of Stephen Sands, an influential member and trustee of the John-street Church, who entertained them with liberal hospitality. John Dickins, the Methodist preacher of the city, was soon introduced to them, and welcomed them heartily. Coke stated to him the scheme which he brought from Wesley. Dickins, being one of the Fluvanna brethren, emphatically approved it, and requested that it might at once be announced to the public, assured that it would be received with joy. Coke deemed it expedient to disclose it no further till he could consult Asbury. Intimations, however, of his official visit had preceded him, and he writes, that "by some means or other the whole country has been, as it were, expecting, and Mr. Asbury looking out for me for some time."

On the night of his arrival he preached his first sermon in the new world, in John-street Chapel. The next day, and still the next, he proclaimed his message, and on the afternoon of the latter set off with his colleagues for Philadelphia, where they arrived on Saturday evening, and were entertained by Jacob Baker, "merchant in Market-street." The next day Coke preached in the morning for Dr. M'Gaw, at St. Paul's, and in the evening to the Methodist Society at St. George's. On Monday Drs. M'Gaw and White (the latter afterward Bishop of Pennsylvania) paid their respects to him, and White invited him to occupy his pulpit on the ensuing Sabbath. He was presented to the governor of the state, an acquaintance of Wesley, and an admirer of the writings of Fletcher of Madeley.

By the latter part of the week they are traveling southward, and on Saturday are received by Bassett, at Dover, where the latter was now erecting a Methodist chapel. Coke meets Garrettson at Bassett's house and admires him as "an excellent young man, all meekness, love, and activity." On Sunday, 14th of November, he arrives with Whatcoat, at Barrett's chapel, "so called from the name of our friend who built it, and who went to heaven a few days ago." "In this chapel," he adds, "in the midst of a forest, I had a noble congregation, to whom I endeavored to set forth the Redeemer as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. After the sermon, a plain, robust man came up to me in the pulpit and kissed me. I thought it could be no other than Mr. Asbury, and I was not deceived. I administered the sacrament, after preaching, to five or six hundred communicants, and held a love-feast. It was the best season I ever knew, except one at Charlemont in Ireland. After dinner Mr. Asbury and I had a private conversation on the future management of our affairs in America. He informed me that he had received some intimations of my arrival on the continent, and had collected a considerable number of the preachers to form a council, and if they were of opinion that it would be expedient immediately to call a Conference, it should be done. They were accordingly sent for, and, after debate, were unanimously of that opinion. We therefore sent off Freeborn Garrettson, like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left, and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas eve. Mr. Asbury has also drawn up for me a route of about a thousand miles in the mean time. He has given me his black, (Harry by name,) and borrowed an excellent horse for me. I exceedingly reverence Mr

Asbury; he has so much wisdom and consideration, so much meekness and love; and under all this, though hardly to be perceived, so much command and authority He and I have agreed to use our joint endeavors to establish a school or college. I baptized here thirty or forty infants, and seven adults. We had indeed a precious time at the baptism of the adults."

Asbury knew not that Coke was present till he arrived at the chapel. The occasion was a regular Quarterly Meeting of the circuit, and fifteen of the preachers and a host of the laity were there. A spectator of the scene says: "While Coke was preaching, Asbury came into the congregation. A solemn pause and deep silence took place at the close of the sermon, as an interval for introduction and salutation. Asbury and Coke, with hearts full of brotherly love, approached, embraced, and saluted each other. The other preachers, at the same time, were melted into sympathy and tears. The congregation also caught the glowing emotion, and the whole assembly, as if struck with a shock of heavenly electricity, burst into a flood of tears. Every heart appeared overflowing with love and fellowship, and an ecstasy of joy and gladness ensued. I can never forget the affecting scene. The sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered, by the doctor and Whatcoat, to several hundreds, and it was a blessed season to many souls, while, in the holy ordinance, they discerned, through faith, the Lord's body, and showed forth his death. It is the more affecting to my memory, as it was the first time I ever partook of the Lord's supper, and the first time that the ordinance was ever administered among the Methodists by their own regularly ordained preachers." [20]

[20] Ezekiel Cooper's Funeral Discourse on Asbury, p. 165. This meeting was further memorable as the occasion on which Cooper himself

Thus we reach again the memorable interview at Barrett's Chapel; and here, in the forest solitude, the momentous scheme of Coke's mission was fully disclosed, the first General Conference of American Methodism appointed, Garrettson "sent off like an arrow" to summon it together, and the project of Dickins, for a Methodist college, revived. It was with prayerful counsels, sacramental solemnities, liberal devisings, and with singing and shouting, that the young denomination prepared, in this woodland retreat, to enter upon its new and world-wide destinies.

(one of the most important preachers of early Methodism) was induced, after long hesitation, to join the itinerant ranks.

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CHAPTER II.

BISHOP COKE IN AMERICA.

Coke itinerating before the Christmas Conference — Sketch of "Black Harry" — Scenes on the Peninsula — Black Harry's preaching — Ware's Account of Coke — The Bishop meets his English Associates, with Asbury and Black, of Nova Scotia, at Abingdon — They are received at Perry Hall — Coke and Black's Account of the Place — Preparations for the Conference.

The route which Asbury recommended to Coke, for the time that remained before the Christmas General Conference, was that which he himself had just gone over, taking in most of the numerous appointments of the Peninsula. "Black Harry," (Harry Hosier,) Asbury's traveling servant, who was now to accompany the doctor, was a notable character of that day.[1] Asbury first alludes to him, in 1780, as a suitable traveling companion to preach to the colored people. He was exceedingly popular in Philadelphia as a preacher. Dr. Rush, whose predilections for Methodist preaching are well known, did not disdain to hear him, and, making allowance for his illiteracy, (for he could not read,) pronounced him "the greatest orator in America." He was small in stature, and perfectly black, but had eyes of remarkable brilliancy and keenness, and singular readiness and aptness of speech. He traveled extensively with Asbury, Coke, and Whatcoat. We shall hereafter find him traversing New England with Garrettson. He acted as servant, or "driver," for these eminent itinerants, but excelled them

[1] He must not, however, be confounded with "Black Harry" of St. Eustatius, who occupies so romantic a place in Coke's subsequent history. Hist. of the Relig. Movement, etc., vol. ii, p. 358.

all in popularity as a preacher, sharing with them in their public services, not only in black, but in white congregations. When they were disabled by sickness or any other cause, they could trust the pulpit to Harry without fear of unfavorably disappointing the people. Asbury acknowledges that the best way to obtain a large congregation was to announce that Harry would preach; the multitude preferring him to the bishop himself.[2] Though he withstood for years the temptations of extraordinary popularity, he fell, nevertheless, by the indulgent hospitalities which were lavished upon him. He became temporarily the victim of wine, but had moral strength enough to recover himself. Self-abased and contrite, he started one evening down the Neck, below Southwark, Philadelphia, determined to remain till his backslidings were healed. Under a tree he wrestled in prayer into the watches of the night. Before the morning God restored to him the joys of his salvation. Thenceforward he continued faithful.[3] He resumed his public labors, and about the year 1810 died in Philadelphia, "making a good end," and was borne to the grave by a great procession of both white and black admirers, who buried him as a hero, once overcome, but finally victorious.

[2] "It has been said that on one occasion, in Wilmington, Del., where Methodism was long unpopular, a number of the citizens, who did not ordinarily attend Methodist preaching, came together to hear Bishop Asbury. Old Asbury Chapel was, at that time, so full that they could not get in. They stood outside to hear the bishop, as they supposed, but in reality they heard Harry. Before they left the place, they complimented the speaker by saying: 'If all Methodist preachers could preach like the bishop we should like to be constant hearers.' Some one present replied, 'That was not the bishop but the bishop's servant.' This only raised the bishop higher in their estimation; as their conclusion was, 'if such be the servant, what must the master be?' The truth was, that Harry was a more popular speaker than Asbury, or almost any one else in his day."—*Lednum*, p. 282.

[3] Lednum, p. 282.

Accompanied by Black Harry, Coke set out on his ministerial tour, holding one or two services daily. In two days, after the meeting at Barrett's Chapel, he was preaching in White's Chapel, Kent County, and rejoicing in the Christian hospitalities of Judge White. At Annamessex Chapel he preached in a forest. "It is romantic," he says, "to see such numbers of horses fastened to the trees. Being engaged in the most solemn exercises of religion, for three or four hours every day, I hardly know the day of the week; every one appears to me like the Lord's day." At Bolingbroke he says: "I preached at noon; our chapel is in a forest. Perhaps I have, in this tour, baptized more children and adults than I should in my whole life if stationed in an English parish." "I preached to a lively congregation at Tuckahoe Chapel in a forest; the best singers I have met with in America. In the afternoon, went to Colonel Hopper's; a man of excellent sense, a member of our Society, six years sheriff of Caroline County, and late a representative in the Assembly. In my way dined with the present representative, a dear brother, who has lately 'built us a synagogue.' Some time ago, during the war, when he was sheriff for the county, one of our preachers was apprehended because he would not take the oaths of allegiance. Mr. Downs, the sheriff, told the preacher that he was obliged to imprison him, but that he would turn his own house into his prison; and both the colonel and his lady were awakened by their prisoner." He becomes delighted with his African colleague, for such Harry really was. "I have now," he writes, on the 29th of November, "had the pleasure of hearing Harry preach several times. I sometimes give notice, immediately after preaching, that in a little time he will preach to the blacks; but the whites always stay to hear him.

Sometimes I publish him to preach at candle-light, as the negroes can better attend at that time. I really believe that he is one of the best preachers in the world—there is such an amazing power attends his word, though he cannot read, and he is one of the humblest creatures I ever saw."

Coke continued to preach to great throngs, on the Peninsula, till near the date of the Conference. His congregations were sometimes so large that he was compelled to address them from the chapel doors. Methodist families flocked from all directions to receive the sacraments from his hands. Thomas Ware, who was in this region, says "he passed through our circuit. I met him at Colonel Hopper's, in Queen Anne County, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. At first I was not pleased with his appearance. His stature, complexion, and voice resembled those of a woman rather than those of a man; and his manners were too courtly for me. So unlike was he to the grave and, as I conceived, apostolic Asbury, that his appearance did not prepossess me favorably. He had several appointments on the circuit, to which I conducted him; and, before we parted, I saw so many things to admire in him that I no longer marveled at his being selected by Wesley to serve us in the capacity of a superintendent. In public he was generally admired, and in private he was very communicative and edifying. At one time, in a large circle, he expressed himself in substance as follows: 'I am charmed by the spirit of my American brethren. Their love to Mr. Wesley is not surpassed by that of their brethren in Europe. It is founded on the excellence—the *divinity*—of the religion which he has been the instrument of reviving, and which has shed its benign influence on this land of freedom. I see in both preachers and people a resolution to venture

on any bold act of duty, when called to practice piety before the ungodly, and to refuse compliance with fashionable vice. I see,' he continued, with a countenance glowing with delight, 'a great and effectual door opened for the promulgation of Methodism in America, whose institutions I greatly admire, and whose prosperity I no less wish than I do that of the land which gave me birth. In the presence of Mr. Asbury I feel myself a child. He is, in my estimation, the most apostolic man I ever saw, except Mr. Wesley.' These remarks of Dr. Coke made an impression on my mind not soon to be forgotten. He was the best speaker, in a private circle or on the conference floor, I ever heard. But his voice was too weak to command with ease a very large audience. Yet this he could sometimes do; and, when he succeeded in it, his preaching was very impressive. Some of the first scholars in the country have been heard to say that he spoke the purest English they ever heard. His fine classical taste did not raise him, in his own estimation, above the weakest of his brethren. To them he paid the kindest attentions; and the most diffident and retiring among them, after being a short time in his company, were not only perfectly at ease, but happy at finding themselves associated with a brother who had learned to esteem others better than himself." He subsequently returned to this section of the country, when, says Ware, the "administration of the ordinances at our Quarterly Meetings was singularly owned of God. Vast multitudes attended, and the power of the Lord was present to wound and to heal. The whole Peninsula seemed moved; and the people, in multitudes, flocked to hear the doctor, who spent some time on this favored shore. Never did I see any person who seemed to enjoy himself better than he did, while *thousands* pressed to him

to have their children dedicated to the Lord by baptism, and to receive themselves the holy supper at his hands. Daily accessions were made to the Church."

Meanwhile, Whatcoat and Vasey had accompanied Asbury from Barrett's Chapel over the Western Shore of Maryland. The 26th of November Asbury observed "as a day of fasting and prayer, that I might," he says, "know the will of God in the matter that is shortly to come before our Conference; the preachers and people seem to be much pleased with the projected plan; I myself am led to think it is of the Lord. I am not tickled with the honor to be gained; I see danger in the way. My soul waits upon God. O that he may lead us in the way we should go!" At Abingdon they met Coke, on his way to Perry Hall; the next day the doctor preached a "great sermon" on "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." At Abingdon joined them also William Black, an English preacher, who had been founding Methodism in Nova Scotia, and had wended his way through Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, seeking ministerial reinforcements for that distant province. On the 17th of December all the travelers, except Whatcoat, arrived under the roof of Gough at Perry Hall, "the most elegant house," says Coke, "in this state." "Here," he adds, "I have a noble room to myself, where Mr. Asbury and I may, in the course of a week, mature everything for the Conference." Black alludes to Perry Hall as "the most spacious and elegant building" he had seen in America. "It is," he says, "about fifteen miles from Baltimore; Mr. Gough, its owner, is a Methodist, and supposed to be worth one hundred thousand pounds. He is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. He has built a neat stone meeting-house, entertains the Circuit Preachers, and at times preaches himself; and

thus he continued to do during the late war, at the risk of his immense estate."[4] Whatcoat, who had delayed, in order to preach on the route, arrived on the 19th. The next day they began the revision of "the Rules and Minutes," and made other provisions for the approaching session. Four days were spent in this task, relieved by frequent religious exercises in Gough's numerous family, and by the social hospitalities of the neighborhood.

[4] Dr. Richey's Life of Black, p. 135. Halifax, N. S. 1839.

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CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE—ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The first General Conference — Lovely Lane Chapel — Wesley's Letter to the American Methodists — Coke and Asbury elected Superintendents or Bishops — Whatcoat's Account of the Proceedings — Coke's Sermon at the Consecration of Asbury — Character of the Conference — Preachers present — Were their Measures in accordance with Wesley's Intentions? — Expediency of the Episcopal Title of the New Church.

On Friday, the 24th of December,[1] 1784, the apostolic little company rode from Perry Hall to Baltimore, and at ten o'clock A.M. began the first "General Conference," in the Lovely Lane Chapel. The latter was still a rude structure, and Coke commended gratefully the kindness of the people in furnishing a large stove, and backs to some of the seats, for the comfort of the Conference.[2]

Garrettson had sped his way over twelve hundred miles in six weeks, calling to Baltimore the itinerants, and preaching as he went, and had returned to find sixty present. Coke, on taking the chair, presented a letter

[1] Not the 25th, as Bangs (Hist., i, 157) and Wakeley (Lost Chapters, 304) say; nor the 27th, as Lee (Hist., 94) says. Lee, however, followed the published Minutes, which, in their very title, give the date as the 27th. (See them in Emory's Hist. of the Dis., p. 26.) The reader has already been often reminded of the errata of our early official documents. For the present correction compare Coke's certificate of Asbury's ordination, (Bangs, i, 157,) Coke's Journal, (p. 23,) Asbury's Journal, (i, 486,) and especially Whatcoat's Journal, (p. 21.) Coke says expressly, "On Christmas eve we opened our Conference," meaning, however, not so much the evening as the day preceding Christmas. It was called the "Christmas Conference" because it extended through the "Christmas week."

[2] Dr. Hamilton: letter to the author.

from Wesley, dated Bristol, September 10th, 1784, and addressed "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America." It said that "by a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the British empire, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the state Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch. Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our traveling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church, to which I belonged. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers; so that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *superintendents* over our brethren in North America. As also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey

to act as *elders* among them, by baptizing and ministering the Lord's supper. If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken. It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one only, but could not prevail; 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay; 3. If they would ordain them now they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

In accordance with this document "it was agreed," says Asbury, "to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons." Asbury declined ordination to the superintendency, unless, in addition to the appointment of Wesley, his brethren should formally elect him to that office.[3] Coke and he were unanimously elected superintendents. Whatcoat's notes of the occasion, though brief, are more specific than any other cotemporary document relating to it. He says: "On the 24th we rode to Baltimore; at ten o'clock we began our Conference, in which we agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, *in which the Liturgy* (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) *should be read*,

[3] Lee, p. 94.

and the sacraments be administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who shall be ordained by a presbytery, using the Episcopal form, as prescribed in the Rev. Mr. Wesley's prayer book. Persons to be ordained are to be nominated by the superintendent, elected by the Conference, and ordained by imposition of the hands of the superintendent and elders; *the superintendent has a negative voice.*"[4] He further states that on the second day of the session Asbury was ordained deacon by Coke, assisted by his presbyters, Vasey and Whatcoat; on Sunday, the third day, they ordained him elder; on Monday he was consecrated superintendent, his friend, Otterbein, of the German Church, assisting Coke and his elders in the rite. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were spent in enacting rules of Discipline, and the election of preachers to orders. On Friday several deacons were ordained; on Saturday, January 1st, 1785, the project of Abingdon College was considered; on Sunday, the 2d, twelve elders (previously ordained deacons) and one deacon were ordained; "and we ended," adds Whatcoat, "our Conference in great peace and unanimity."

The session was a jubilee to the Methodists of Baltimore and its vicinity. Coke preached every day at noon, two of his discourses being especially on the ministerial office, and afterward published; there was preaching, by other members of the body, every morning and evening; Otterbein's Church, and the Methodist chapels in the town and at the Point, were occupied by them. Coke says: "Our Conference continued ten days. I admire

[4] Mems., p. 21. The italics are his own. There are no official records or Minutes of this Conference except the preliminary reference to it in the Minutes of 1785, and the Discipline, as published after the Conference. The latter is given entire in Emory's Hist. of the Dis., p. 25. New York. 1844.

the American preachers. We had nearly sixty of them present; the whole number is eighty-one. They are indeed a body of devoted, disinterested men, but most of them young. The spirit in which they conducted themselves, in choosing the elders, was most pleasing. I believe they acted without being at all influenced by friendship, resentment, or prejudice, both in choosing and rejecting. The Lord was peculiarly present while I was preaching my two pastoral sermons. On one of the week-days, at noon, I made a collection toward assisting our brethren who are going to Nova Scotia; and our friends generously contributed fifty pounds currency—thirty pounds sterling."

Coke's sermon at the Episcopal consecration of Asbury produced a vivid impression, and presents some eloquent passages. After describing the true bishop it thus concludes: "O thou lover of souls, who willest not the death of a sinner, have pity on the world. Remember Calvary. Hear the pleading Intercessor, and raise up men after thine own heart, full of the Holy Ghost, full of love, and full of zeal. Guide them by thy Spirit, accompany them with thine omnipotence, that they may tread the kingdom of Satan under their feet, and build up thy glorious Church. You may now perceive the dreadful effects of raising immoral or unconverted men to the government of the Church. The baneful influence of their example is so extensive that the skill and cruelty of devils can hardly fabricate a greater curse than an irreligious bishop. But thou, O man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, patience, and meekness. Be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Keep that which is committed to thy trust. Be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, but a partaker of the afflictions of the

Gospel according to the power of God. Endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry, and thy God will open to thee a wide door, which all thy enemies shall not be able to shut. *He will carry his Gospel by thee from sea to sea, and from one end of the continent to another.* O thou who art the Holy One and the True, consecrate this thy servant with the fire of divine love; separate him for thy glorious purpose, make him a star in thine own right hand, and fulfill in him and by him the good pleasure of thy goodness."

Watters says that Wesley's plan was adopted "in a regular formal manner, with not one dissenting voice." Black, from Nova Scotia, gazed upon the scene with admiration. "Perhaps," he says, "such a number of holy, zealous, godly men never before met together in Maryland, perhaps not on the continent of America."

It is now too late to identify all the preachers who constituted this important Conference. We are certain of the presence of Thomas Coke, LL.D., Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, Thomas Vasey, Freeborn Garrettson, William Gill, Reuben Ellis, Le Roy Cole, Richard Ivey, James O'Kelly, John Haggerty, Nelson Reed, James O. Cromwell, Jeremiah Lambert, John Dickins, William Glendenning, Francis Poythress, Joseph Everett, William Black of N. S., William Phœbus, and Thomas Ware. It has been supposed, from their standing, and the proximity of their circuits, that the following also were present: Edward Dromgoole, Caleb B. Pedicord, Thomas S. Chew, Joseph Cromwell, John Major, Philip Cox, Samuel Rowe, William Partridge, Thomas Foster, George Mair, Samuel Dudley, Adam Cloud, Michael Ellis, James White, Jonathan Forrest, Joseph Wyatt, Philip Bruce, John Magary, William Thomas, John

Baldwin, Woolman Hickson, Thomas Haskins, Ira Ellis, John Easter, Peter Moriarty, Enoch Matson, Lemuel Green, Thomas Curtis, William Jessup, Wilson Lee, Thomas Jackson, James Riggin, William Ringold, Isaac Smith, Matthew Greentree, William Lynch, Thomas Bowen, Moses Park, William Cannon, and Richard Swift.[5]

Of the personal appearance and character of the members it has been said that nothing arrested the attention of Dr. Coke more, as he looked over the assembly for the first time, than the generally youthful aspect of the preachers, though most of them, he says, bore the marks of severe toil and hard usage. Some of them had suffered imprisonment for conscience' sake, and others the maltreatment of their persons by infuriated mobs. "Leaving out Asbury and his English brethren, Whatcoat and Vasey, who were yet in the prime of life, the American preachers had still about them the prestige of a vigorous manhood. Few, if any of them, would now be called old men. Dromgoole, who joined the Conference in 1774, had traveled but ten years, and sat as senior among his brethren. John Cooper and William Glendenning were one year later, and then Francis Poythress and Freeborn Garrettson, who entered the Conference in 1776. After this we see the names of eleven, including John Dickins and Caleb B. Pedicord, who joined in 1777, and for 1778 and 1779 eight more. These fourteen preachers, with Dr. Coke, Bishop Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey, in all eighteen, constituted properly what might be called the age of the Conference, being men of experience, and well acquainted with the workings of Methodism. A few others had traveled four years, some three; a considerable number

[5] Lednum, p. 413.

two years, and others even not more than ten months. Thus a large proportion of the members of that great council were young men, young, at least, in the work of the ministry; but many of them, doubtless, had old heads on young shoulders. With such master-spirits as Coke and Asbury, Whatcoat, Dromgoole, Poythress, Garrettson, and Dickins to direct and influence their deliberations, nothing was likely to be done, was done, but what was best for the whole Church. Their work of ten days has been before us for three fourths of a century, and speaks for itself; will continue to speak in all coming time as presenting one of the wisest and fairest monuments of human arrangement for the good of the race. The secret of their success was their oneness of spirit. Like the disciples in the Jerusalem chamber, 'they were all of one heart and of one mind.' Whoever looks at the system of rules or of government devised and sent forth by the General Conference of 1784 must concede to it a 'wholesidedness,' and unselfishness both as it regards the preachers themselves and the people under their care. Casting aside all precedents as unauthoritative in Church government, and looking to the examples of Christ and his apostles, they went straight on in the work of planning and executing, knowing at the time the obloquy and scorn with which they would be assailed from every quarter; and now that men have grown wiser in spite of themselves, the Methodists can look up in conscious manhood while pointing to the result, and say, 'Behold what God hath wrought.'"[6]

In compliance with the call from Nova Scotia, Garrettson and James O. Cromwell were ordained elders for that province. Jeremiah Lambert was ordained to the same office for Antigua, in the West Indies. For the

[6] Dr. Hamilton to the author.

United States the elders were John Tunnell, William Gill, Le Roy Cole, Nelson Reed, John Haggerty, Reuben Ellis, Richard Ivey, Henry Willis, James O'Kelly, and Beverly Allen. Tunnell, Willis, and Allen were not present, but received ordination after the session. John Dickins, Ignatius Pigman, and Caleb Boyer were chosen deacons. Boyer and Pigman were ordained in June following at the Conference in Baltimore.

Were these extraordinary proceedings in accordance with the intentions of Wesley? The question has been gravely asked, but never by any recognized Methodist authority on either side of the Atlantic. "Churchmen" have contended that Wesley designed merely to provide, for a temporary exigency in his American Societies, by an anomalous commission, vested in Coke and his associates; that his acts at Bristol were not considered by him "ordinations," and that Coke and Asbury transcended his designs in forming the "Methodist Episcopal Church." The historical facts of the case are so palpable and demonstrative that it is astonishing any such suspicion could for a moment be entertained. Wesley believed in the scriptural parity of bishops and presbyters, and the essential right of the latter to ordain. In his preparatory consultation with Coke he stated, as we have seen, this opinion, and referred to the ancient Alexandrian Church as presenting an example of it; and in his letter, by Coke, to the American Conference, he cites, in vindication of his proceedings, Lord King's "Primitive Church" as proving it; expressly using the word "ordination," and justifying his acts at Bristol as "ordinations." Coke was already a presbyter of the Church of England; to what was he now ordained then, by Wesley, if not to the only remaining office of bishop? Wesley precluded his brother, Charles Wesley,

from the Bristol proceedings, because of his well-known prelatical prejudices; why such a precaution if these proceedings were merely what "Churchmen" allege them to have been? Presbyters were summoned to take part in these proceedings, according "to the usages of the Church of England" in ordinations; why, if they were not ordinations? Whatcoat and Vasey were consecrated by two separate acts, on two successive days, as deacons and elders; why these distinct ceremonies if they were merely endued with a nondescript commission? Would not one suffice if there were no reference to some established usage? and where is there any such usage in the Christian Church, aside from ordination? Wesley prepared, printed, and sent by Coke a Ritual, containing the forms of the English Church for the ordinations of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, to be used by the new American Church in its ministerial consecrations; why, if he designed no ordinations, no Episcopal regimen in the new Church? and why put them in permanent printed form if they were not designed to be permanent provisions? He changed the name of bishop to superintendent, of presbyter to elder, (synonymous titles in both instances,) but retained the name of deacon; why, if the change were not solely to avoid the adventitious and pretentious associations of the higher titles, while retaining their essential significance and the humbler title unchanged?[7]

The American Minutes, published a few months after the Baltimore General Conference, declared that "following the counsels of Mr. John Wesley, who *recommended the Episcopal* mode of Church government," the Conference had formed "an Episcopal Church." These Minutes were, soon afterward, under the eye of Wesley, and in

[7] The title of the Form for Superintendents in the Ritual is "The Form of *Ordaining* of a Superintendent."

1786 the American Discipline, with similar declarations, was reprinted, with the Liturgy prepared by Wesley, in London and under Wesley's care, but he never demurred at their language.[8] By July Coke himself was again in England, attending Wesley's Conference, and reporting his American proceedings; Charles Wesley attacked him and "his Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore." He defended himself through the press by asserting that "he had done nothing but under the direction of Mr. Wesley;" and the latter declared to his brother, "I believe Dr. Coke as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has done nothing rashly that I know." For four years the title "superintendent" was used by the American Methodists instead of that of "bishop," but the latter had been inserted in their Minutes, which say that "following the counsel of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the Episcopal mode of government, we thought it best to become an Episcopal Church, making the Episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or *bishop*, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." The title was thus inserted in the very first Minutes issued after the Christmas Conference, issued in the year in which that Conference closed, and but a few months after its adjournment.[9] Wesley never objected to this incidental use of it. When, however,

[8] In 1789, about two years before the death of Wesley, the American Minutes declared that "in the year 1784 the Rev. John Wesley determined, at the intercession of multitudes of his spiritual children on this continent, to ordain ministers for America. Preferring the Episcopal mode of Church government, he set apart Thomas Coke for the Episcopal office, and having delivered to him letters of Episcopal orders, directed him to set apart Francis Asbury for the same Episcopal office, in consequence of which the said Francis Asbury was solemnly set apart for the said Episcopal office." Evidently, then, Wesley had not disapproved the language of the previous Minutes, now more than four years before the public.

[9] Minutes, etc., i, p. 22.

the superintendents began personally to be called bishops, he wrote a letter to Asbury emphatically objecting to its use as a personal title. Upon this letter has been founded most of the misconstructions of his design in the organization of the American Church. It is, however, indisputably clear that it was not to their Episcopal function, but their personal Episcopal title that he objected; he wished not to see, associated with the function, the pretentious ecclesiastical dignities which had become identified with it in the High-Church fables and follies of his age. May it not then be asserted, as I have ventured to affirm, in the discussion of this subject in another work, that, looking at this series of arguments, the American Methodists will be acquitted of presumption when they assume that they may here make a triumphant stand, surrounded by evidence superabundant and impregnable. The ecclesiastical system under which it has pleased God to give them and their families spiritual shelter and fellowship with his saints, and whose efficiency has surprised the Christian world, is not, as their opponents would represent, an imposition of their preachers, and contrary to the wishes of Wesley, but was legitimately received from his hands as the providential founder of Methodism. If Wesley's strong repugnance to the mere name of bishop had been expressed, before its adoption by the American Church, it would probably not have been adopted. Still, the American Church was now a separate organization, and was at perfect liberty to dissent from Wesley on a matter of mere expediency. The Church thought it had good reasons to use the name. The American Methodists were mostly of English origin. The people of their country among whom Methodism was most successful were either from England or of immediate English descent, and had been

educated to consider Episcopacy a wholesome and an apostolical government of the Church. They approved and had the office, why not, then, have the name? especially as, without the name, the office itself would be liable to lose, in the eyes of the people, its peculiar character, and thereby fail in that appeal to their long established opinions which Methodism had a right, both from principle and expediency, to make? The English Establishment having been dissolved in this country, and the Protestant Episcopalians not being yet organized on an independent basis, and the episcopal organization of the Methodists having preceded that of the Protestant Episcopalians, the Methodist Church had a clear right to present itself to the American public as competent to aid in supplying the place of the abolished Establishment, having the same essential principles without its peculiar defects. And may not the fact of the assumption of an episcopal character, nominally as well as really, by the American Methodists, be considered providential? Episcopacy, both in America and England, has reached an excess of presumption and arrogance. The moderate party, once declared by Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to include a large majority of American Episcopalians,[10] has nearly disappeared. Was it not providential, under these circumstances, that a body of Christians should appear, exceeding every other in success, and nominally and practically bearing an Episcopal character, without any of its presumptuous pretensions? Amid the uncharitable assumptions of prelatical Episcopalians, the Methodist Episcopal Church stands forth a monument of the laborious and simple Episcopacy of the early ages; its success, as well as its humility, contrasting it with its more pretentious but feebler sister. It

[10] Case of the Prot. Epis. Church in the United States, etc., p. 25.

has thus practically vindicated Episcopacy as an expedient form of ecclesiastical government, and assuredly it needs vindication in these days. Such, then, is the evidence which should, with all men of self-respectful candor, conclude decisively the question of Wesley's design and agency in the organization of American Methodism.

CHAPTER IV.

ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH—CONTINUED.

Legislative Proceedings of the Conference — Its Records — Wesley's "Large Minutes" — Wesley's Prayer Book for American Methodism — Gowns and Bands — The Articles of Religion — Wesley's continued Superintendence recognized — The "Slavery Question" — The Functions of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons defined — Printing of the Minutes — Salaries, or "Allowance" — "Fees" — "The Preachers' Fund" — "The General Fund" — Baptism — The Lord's Supper and Class-Meetings.

THE further and more specifically legislative proceedings of the Christmas General Conference were highly important.

Though no "Journal" of the doings, in the usual form, was published or preserved in manuscript, its enactments were embodied in a volume "composing a form of Discipline for the ministers, preachers, and other members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America,"[1] published in Philadelphia in 1785, and bound up

[1] Its complete title is, "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev. Thos. Coke, LL.D., the Rev. Francis Asbury, and others, at a Conference begun in Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, on Monday, the 27th of December, in the year 1784. Composing a Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers, and other Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America." Bangs (Hist., vol. i, p. 175) gives a quotation from the Discipline of nearly forty pages, nearly the entire book, supposing it to be "the rules as they were then adopted," that is to say, at the Christmas Conference. To save my own citations from impeachment I have to remark that my late venerated friend fell into an important error. He gives not the Discipline of the Christmas Conference. His quoted edition is in the form of sections, etc.; this was not the form of that of the Christmas Conference; the sectional form was not introduced till 1787, and no copy of the edition of this year is extant. (Emory's Hist. of Dis., p. 82.) Nor could he have quoted

with the "Sunday Service," and "Collection of Psalms and Hymns," which Wesley had prepared for the American Societies, and had sent over in sheets.[2] In 1786 a new edition of the whole, in one book, was printed in London, under Wesley's eye.[3] Hitherto, what are called the "Large Minutes" of Wesley had been recognized as the authoritative Discipline of the American Societies, with the special enactments of the American Conferences superadded. The Large Minutes were a compilation, made by Wesley from the Annual Minutes of the British Conference.[4] In the preliminary deliberations at Perry Hall they were revised and adapted to the new form of the American Church, and being adopted by the Christ-

from this later edition, for Lee (Hist., pp. 127, 128) says it contained thirty-one sections, whereas that given by Dr. Bangs has thirty-five. Moreover, his quotations show that he must have used a copy which could not have been issued before 1789, for they include a law respecting local preachers which was first inserted in the latter year. This correction is the more important, as the doctor intimates that he could not find, "either in the printed Minutes or the Discipline," the important passages I give, in the present chapter, on slavery, but gives them from Lee, as "the substance" of what this Conference did in reference to this subject, and supposes, in a note, that they were never printed. They were printed in 1785, forming a part of the original Discipline or Minutes of 1784. They were not omitted till the London edition of 1786, though suspended as a law in 1785. If any further proof that he quoted a later edition is necessary, it will be seen in the fact that his quotations use the word "bishop," which was not inserted as a personal title of the superintendent till 1787. Substantially the Minutes of 1784 (first published in 1785) have always been the Discipline of the Church; but those modifications, which have been made from time to time, had already begun when the edition from which Dr. Bangs quotes was issued. As above shown, not only important omissions and additions, but an entire change of its form had taken place.

[2] Bishop Emory's "Defense of our Fathers," sec. 8. New York, 1840.

[3] Emory's History of the Discipline, p. 80.

[4] Their title reads: "Minutes of several Conferences between the Rev. Mr. Wesley, and others," etc. They were several times revised and enlarged from 1744 to 1789, when the last revision before Wesley's death was made. They are the Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodists of England.

mas Conference, were incorporated with the "Sunday Service" and Hymns, and published in 1785 as the Discipline of American Methodism. In this volume, therefore, we find the enactments of the Christmas Conference.[5]

It has been seen that Wesley sent over by Coke a Liturgy abridged from that of the English Establishment, and entitled "The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America. With other Occasional Services. London: Printed in the year 1784." It contained a form of Public Prayer, "The Form and Manner of Making and Ordaining of Superintendents, Elders, and Deacons," and "The Articles of Religion." Another part of this Liturgy or "Service" was "A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day. Published by John Wesley, M.A., late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and Charles Wesley, M.A., late Student of Christ Church, Oxford. London: Printed in the year 1784." The General Conference of 1784, organizing the Church, adopted these, and, therefore, in the emphasized language of Whatcoat, "agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, *in which the Liturgy* (as presented by the Rev. John Wesley) *should be read*." This organic provision has never been formally repealed. The General Conference has, indeed, at a later session, directed that for the "establishment of uniformity in public worship," "the morning service shall consist of singing, prayer, the reading of a chapter out of the Old Testament, and another out of the New, and preaching."[6] But it has not directed what the two lessons shall be, nor what the form of prayer; its prescription would nearly correspond with

[5] The younger Emory has given, in his History of the Discipline, p. 26, the whole of the "Large Minutes" as adopted in 1784, discriminating the enactments of the American Conference.

[6] Discipline, Part I, chap. 2, § 1.

the original "Sunday Service," and as the latter has never been formally abrogated, any Methodist Society could legally adopt it. Public opinion has, however, silently but effectually rendered it obsolete, and few Methodists now know that their Church was organized with a Liturgical Service by the direction of Wesley himself. It was used for a few years, in both cities and country, in the principal Churches; but Sabbath love-feasts, or other extra services, frequently preoccupied the time allotted to it, and, from being occasionally omitted, it at last fell into entire disuse.[7] It was published in but two editions, both printed in London.[8] In 1787 the General Minutes, or Discipline proper, was published in a separate pamphlet; the "Articles of Religion," the Sacramental, Ordination, and other administrative forms of the Ritual, or "Sunday Service," were subsequently copied into the Discipline, and the collection of Psalms and hymns were changed into "The Hymn Book." But there are traces of the recognition of the Liturgy down to 1792, when all allusions to it disappear.[9] Many, if not most of the early Methodists, had been brought up in the English Church; to these the Prayer Book was not unacceptable; but the later extension of Methodism comprehended, doubtless, a majority of members whose early education had given them no such predilections.[10] Gowns and bands were also used for some time by the superintendents and elders, but passed away in like manner.

[7] The old preachers, in whose day it was still used, in John-street Chapel, New York, have thus described its failure there.

[8] The edition of 1784 was bound with the first edition of the Discipline, published in Philadelphia in 1785. The Discipline was bound in the London edition of 1786.

[9] Emory, Hist. of the Discipline, p. 80.

[10] Wesley's abridgment of the Common Prayer was exceedingly well done; superior to that adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The Articles of Religion prepared by Wesley, and adopted by this Conference, are an abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church, omitting the third, eighth, thirteenth, fifteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-third, thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh of the latter, also parts of the sixth, ninth, and nineteenth, and introducing verbal emendations of others. Of course the alleged Calvinistic article entirely disappears.

The Conference declared that "during the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands. And we do engage, after his death, to do everything that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the political interests of these states, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."

The institution of slavery was again considered, and stringent and comprehensive measures were adopted for its "extirpation." The Conference declared that "We view it as contrary to the golden law of God, on

It includes the very quintessence of the English Liturgy in the best possible form. I am not aware that any effort has ever been made, in the General Conference or otherwise, to revive its use. The expedience of its restoration has occasionally been discussed in the Church papers. Some Methodists have supposed that its use in our large communities might be desirable, and that, as the Methodist Episcopal Church, rather than the Protestant Episcopal Church, was, by its precedent organization as well as its Articles of Religion, its Ritual forms, and its numerical preponderance, the legitimate successor of the English Church in the United States, its continued use of the Liturgy would not only have attracted to it most immigrant communicants of the parent Church, as well as other persons and families who prefer Liturgical services, but would have enabled it to supersede more effectually than it has the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. It cannot be questioned, however, that a large majority of Methodists believe that any such advantage would have been more than counterbalanced by many disadvantages.

which hang all the law and the prophets, and the inalienable rights of mankind, as well as every principle of the Revolution, to hold in the deepest debasement, in a more abject slavery than is perhaps to be found in any part of the world except America, so many souls that are all capable of the image of God. We therefore think it our most bounden duty to take immediately some effectual method to extirpate this abomination from among us." They then require every Methodist to "execute and record within twelve months after notice from the assistant" a legal instrument emancipating all slaves, in his possession, at specified ages. Any person concerned who should not concur in this requirement had liberty to leave the Church within one year, otherwise the preacher was to exclude him. No person holding slaves could be admitted to membership, or to the Lord's supper, till he had complied with this law; but it was to be applied only where the laws of the state permitted. Methodists in Virginia were allowed two years "to consider the expedience of compliance or non-compliance." Buying, selling, or giving away slaves, unless to free them, was forbidden on penalty of expulsion from the Church. These rules produced much hostile excitement, and were suspended in less than six months. Not a few emancipations, however, occurred before their suspension.

The duties of the ordained preachers were defined. Those of the superintendent were to ordain superintendents, elders, and deacons; to preside as a moderator in the Conferences; to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits; and, in the intervals of the Conference, to change, receive, or suspend preachers, as necessity might require, and to receive appeals from the preachers and people, and decide them. No

person could be ordained a superintendent, elder, or deacon, without the consent of a majority of the Conference, and the consent and imposition of the hands of a superintendent. The superintendent was made amenable for his conduct to the Conference, "who have power to expel him for improper conduct if they see it necessary." If he cease to travel without the consent of the Conference, "he shall not thereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in the Church." If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no superintendent, "the Conference shall elect one, and the elders, or any three of them, shall ordain him." The office of an elder "is to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and to perform all the other rites prescribed by the Liturgy." The office of a deacon "is to baptize in the absence of an elder, to assist the elder in the administration of the Lord's supper, to marry, bury the dead, and read the Liturgy to the people as prescribed, except what relates to the administration of the Lord's supper." No person was to be employed as a traveling preacher unless his name were printed in the Minutes, or a certificate given him by a superintendent or the circuit "assistant." It was therefore ordered that the Minutes should be annually printed. Hitherto they had remained in manuscript; in 1785, and ever after, they were regularly published, and in 1794[11] John Dickins issued, in a volume, all these documents, including those which had been in manuscript down to 1785.

The Conference defined the salary or allowance of preachers and their families. It amounted to sixty-four dollars to each, the same sum to each wife of a preacher,

[11] Preface to bound Minutes. New York. 1840. Lee (p. 89) says 1795. All the Annual Minutes from the beginning have been published in bound volumes by the Methodist Book Concern: a large mass of vague but invaluable materials for the historian.

sixteen dollars to each child under the age of six years, and about twenty-two dollars to each over six and under eleven years. No provision was made for children above eleven years old. All allowance for children was repealed in about two years from this date, and no regular provision was made for them till 1800. These bald facts are not without historical and striking significance. The laborious but poorly supported ministry were prohibited by this Conference (that is to say, by themselves) from taking any fee or "present" for marriages, baptisms, or funeral services. After some years they were allowed to accept "presents" for performing the marriage ceremony; but all money thus received was credited to the circuit stewards toward the preacher's allowance. If the latter were otherwise fully provided, (a rare fact,) the marriage fees were taken to the Annual Conference to aid in making up the deficient allowances of other preachers. Not till the year 1800 were marriage fees the private property of the preachers to whom they were given. The ministry was yet one family, with common privations and common reliefs. Their destitution was, however, often so severe that the present Conference devised a plan of relief for "superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers." It was called the "Preachers' Fund," and was to be provided by the preachers themselves paying, at their admission to the Conference, a sum equivalent to two dollars and sixty-seven cents in Federal money, and afterward two dollars annually. These receipts were held by three treasurers, who with three clerks (each keeping a separate account) and three inspectors, (who were to present to the Conference annually an exact account of the fund,) were a committee for its management. Out of the fund provision was to be made, first, for the worn-out preachers,

and then for the widows and orphans. "Every worn-out preacher," say the rules, "shall receive, if he wants it, $64 a year; every widow, if she wants it, $53 33; every child shall receive once for all, if he wants it, $53 33. But none shall be entitled to anything from the fund till he has paid $6 67; nor any who neglects paying his subscription for three years together, unless he be sent by the Conference out of the United States." Lee says that "this fund afforded relief to a good many of our preachers in the time of distress, and most part of the preachers were subscribers to it. The regulations were changed afterward, in some particulars, but the fund continued in operation until we established the Chartered Fund, in 1796. Then all the stock of the Preachers' Fund was thrown into the Chartered Fund, which was incorporated in 1797, in Philadelphia. After that time there was some alteration made in the application of the money given annually by the preachers. The annual subscriptions of the traveling preachers to the Preachers' Fund was to be reserved for extraordinary cases, which the Chartered Fund might not reach. Some time afterward the subscriptions were dropped altogether, and have never since been revived." Annual collections, however, have been generally given by the Churches for such "necessitous cases," and though untold privations have been suffered by the ministry and its families, some of the Annual Conferences, in our day, fully meet their claims as now allowed in the Discipline.

The Conference ordained that a "General Fund for carrying on the whole work of God" should be provided by "a yearly collection, and, if need be, by a quarterly one," in "every principal congregation." It was a contingent fund, chiefly for the expenses of preachers sent into new or distant fields of labor.

It was further enacted that it should be recommended to communicants to receive the eucharist kneeling, but they were to be allowed to receive it standing or sitting. None but members of the Church, or such persons as received "tickets" from the preacher, were to be "admitted to the communion." Baptism was to be administered according to the choice of the candidate, or, if a child, of his parents, either by sprinkling or immersion. Rebaptism of such as had scruples respecting their baptism in infancy was to be allowed. Persons who continued to attend divine service, and to receive the Lord's supper in other Churches, were to "have full liberty as members" of Methodist Societies while they "comply with our rules." Members who should persistently neglect their class-meetings were to be excluded from the Church, after suitable warning. Members marrying "unawakened persons" were also to be expelled—a rule which was modified in 1804 by changing the penalty to "putting back on trial for six months." Subsequently all penalty was abolished, and the Church pledged only to "discourage" such marriages.

Such are the most important additions to, or modifications of, the previous American Minutes and Wesley's "Large Minutes," made by the Christmas Conference.

It remains for us to consider more comprehensively the theological and ecclesiastical character now assumed by American Methodism, as indicated not only in these new measures, but in the prior documents which still constituted the chief portion of its law or discipline.

CHAPTER V.

THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL CHARACTER OF AMERICAN METHODISM.

Wesley's Abridgment of the Thirty-nine Anglican "Articles" — Its Positive Features — Its Negative Features — Papal traces effaced — The Sacraments — Wesley's Opinion of Baptismal Regeneration determined by his Articles — Distinctive Opinions of Wesley not mentioned in the American Articles — Wesley's Arminianism — His Doctrine of Assurance — "Christian Perfection" — Dr. Whedon's Statement — Doctrinal Liberality of Methodism — Did Wesley design the American "Articles" to be a Term of Church Membership? — Peculiar Theological Attitude of Methodism — The Ecclesiastical System of the New Church — Its Synodal Bodies — The General Conference — Its Early History — The Annual Conference — Its Primitive Character and Proceedings — Reading of the "Appointments" — The Quarterly Conference — Its Original Festival Character — Classification of the Ministry — The Bishop — His extraordinary Powers and Amenability — The "Assistant" or Preacher in Charge — His Functions — The "Helper" — His Duties — His severe Regimen — How a call to preach is to be determined — Ceremony of Reception in the Conference — General Ministerial Discipline — Field Preaching — Visiting from House to House — Uprooting of Popular Vices — Studies — Importance of Knowledge — Pastoral Care of Children — Fasting — Preaching Habits — Conduct toward one another — Self-denial — Circulation of Books — The Methodist Society — The Class-meeting and Class-leader — Other Officers — Symmetrical Polity of the Church — Its New Historical Position.

WHAT were now the Theological and Ecclesiastical Platforms of American Methodism?

Wesley's abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England reduced them to twenty-four,[1]

[1] There are, however, twenty-five articles in the Methodist Discipline; one, "Of the Rulers of the United States of America," being added by the Christmas Conference. Wesley inserted in his Liturgy a prayer for the "Supreme Rulers of the United States," but probably judged himself incompetent to frame a suitable article respecting the complicated civil system of the country at that time.

and reduced and amended several of the retained articles. The positive features of this compendium show that the Theology of American Methodism is essentially that of the Anglican Church in all things which according to that Church and the general consent of Christendom, are necessary to Theological "Orthodoxy," or the "Doctrines of Grace," unless his entire omission of the historically equivocal seventeenth article, on "Predestination and Election," be considered an exception. On the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Atonement, the Sacred Canon, Original Sin, Free-will, Justification, and Good Works, he retains the essence, and very nearly the exact language, of the Anglican Symbol. His Arminianism, so called, cannot be said to affect his essential orthodoxy according to the standards of the great bodies of the Christian world. The Greek Church fully sanctioned him in this respect, and, as we have seen, the Augustinian opinions, in modern times denominated Calvinism, have been both accepted and rejected, through considerable historical periods, by the Roman and Anglican Churches.

The negative features of these articles are, however, very suggestive, and the careful study of the document, in this respect, is necessary to a just estimation of the progress of Wesley's theological opinions. He obliterates nearly every trace of those Roman Catholic traditional opinions which the framers of the Anglican Articles retained. The third article, on "The going down of Christ into Hell," entirely disappears. The enumeration and recommendation of the "apocryphal" Scriptures in the sixth article, shares the same fate. The eighth article, recognizing the Nicene, Athanasian, and Apostles' Creeds, is totally omitted; though Wesley, with Christendom generally, approved the last as a good expression of Christian doctrine, and retained it in the baptismal form-

ula of the new Church. The twentieth and twenty-first articles, on "The authority of the Church" and "The authority of General Councils," are abandoned, as also the analogous twenty-third article, declaring "it not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching," etc., without sanction from appointed authorities. The thirty-third, on the treatment of "excommunicated persons," is unmentioned.

Wesley's opinions on the specific virtue of the sacraments, and especially on "Baptismal Regeneration," have been pronounced vague, if not contradictory. His early intimations on these subjects are favorable to the views of High Churchmen; his later, unfavorable to them. It must be remembered that he began his career a strenuous High Churchman, and, though he manfully broke away from many of his early errors, yet on the questions of baptismal regeneration and the consequent condition of baptized infants, it has been supposed that he remained ambiguous to the last. His American "Articles of Religion" negatively decide this question. The twenty-fifth Anglican article declares the sacraments to "be certain, sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and God's good-will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us," etc. Wesley omits the phrases "sure" and "effectual." More significant is his emendation of the twenty-seventh article, "Of Baptism," given in the seventh American article. The former declares baptism to be "a sign of regeneration, or the new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; and faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." All this phrase after "the new birth" is omitted

in the American articles, though the concluding part of the original article is retained with amendments. The omission is the more remarkable as the original article presents little or nothing that is offensive to the general faith of Protestant Christendom. Evidently the reason for this cautious change was his apprehension that it might be supposed to favor, however indirectly, the doctrine of "Baptismal Regeneration." If further proof of his revised opinions on this question were necessary, it is presented in the alterations he made in the sixteenth Anglican article. The original article is entitled, "Of Sin after Baptism;" he entitles the American article, "Of Sin after Justification." The original article reads, "Not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost," etc. The American article reads, "Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost," etc. The original article declares that "the grace of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism;" the American article says "after justification."

But what is most noteworthy in the negative character of the American articles, is the fact that the opinions which are deemed most distinctive of Wesleyan theology have therein no expression, if indeed any intimation. Wesley eliminates the supposed Anglican Calvinism, but he does not introduce his own Arminianism, unless the thirty-first Anglican article on the "Oblation of Christ" be admitted to be Arminian in spite of the seventeenth article on "Predestination." In like manner we have no statement of his doctrines of the "Witness of the Spirit" and "Christian Perfection." And yet no doctrines more thoroughly permeate the preaching, or more entirely characterize the moral life of Methodism than his opinions of

the universal salvability of men, assurance, and sanctification. He evidently designed the articles to be the briefest and barest possible symbol of expedient doctrines; and, as we shall hereafter see, not even a requisite condition of Church membership, though a requisite functional qualification for the ministry. He consigned his other tenets however precious to him, to other means of conservation and diffusion, for it was not his opinion that the orthodoxy of a Church can best guarantee its spiritual life, but rather that its spiritual life can best guarantee its orthodoxy.

The Arminianism of Wesley has been rightly so-called. It is essentially true to the teaching of the great theologian of Holland, though not fully true to the elaborations of his system by Episcopius and Limborch, and much less to its perversions by its later eminent representatives. Wesley had the courage to place the name of Arminius on his periodical organ, one of the earliest and now the oldest of religious Magazines in the Protestant world. His Arminianism was far from being that mongrel system of semi-Pelagianism and semi-Socinianism which, for generations, was denounced by New England theologians as Arminianism, until the most erudite Calvinistic authority of the eastern states rebuked the baseless charge and bade his brethren be no longer guilty of it.[3] He taught "original sin" in the language of the ninth Anglican Article; though he taught also that both the justice and mercy of the Creator require that the human race should not have been continued, under this law of hereditary depravation, unless adequate provisions were made for it by the atonement; he preached, therefore, universal redemption. He taught with the tenth Anglican article, on "Free Will," that "the condition of man, after the

[3] Prof. Stuart, of Andover. See Introduction.

fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God;" that he has "no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God, by Christ, preventing" him; but he taught also that such "preventing grace" is provided for all responsible souls, and that none could be responsible without it. With the eleventh Anglican Article he taught "justification by faith" alone, "and not for our own works and deservings;" yet he also taught that "good works follow after justification," and "do spring out, necessarily, of a true and lively faith." He taught the absolute sovereignty of God; that, like the potter with the clay, he can make some vessels for more, some for less honor; yet he also taught that, as wisdom and beneficence are essential attributes of the divine sovereignty, God neither would nor could (any more than the wise potter with his clay) make some for the gratification of a wanton caprice, in their destruction, much less in their interminable anguish.

Of Wesley's Doctrine of Assurance, founded upon the text, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God;" and upon analogous Scripture passages, I have already said that it was not a peculiar opinion of Methodism, but common, in its essential form, to the leading bodies of Christendom, Greek, Roman, and Protestant; that as a high theological as well as philosophical authority of our times has declared, "Assurance was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or saving faith; that Luther declares, 'He who hath not assurance spews faith out;' and Melancthon, that 'assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism;' that assurance is indeed the *punctum*

saliens of Luther's system, and unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation; that assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin, is held even by Arminius, and stands essentially part and parcel of all the confessions of all Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly."[4] Wesley defines the doctrine clearly and modestly. "By the testimony of the Spirit," he says, "I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God. After twenty years further consideration I see no cause to retract any part of this; neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be uttered so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside. Meantime let it be observed, I do not mean hereby that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture; but he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm, the heart resting in Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that all his iniquities are forgiven and his sins covered." He dis-

[4] Sir Wm. Hamilton: "Discussions on Philosophy," etc., pp. 508, 509. London. 1858.

claims any originality in his teachings on the subject, and says, "With regard to the assurance of faith I apprehend that the whole Christian Church in the first centuries enjoyed it. For though we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene fathers, yet, I think, none that carefully read Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the writer himself possessed it, or all whom he mentions, as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the *Harmonia Confessionum*, and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all reformed Churches in Europe did once believe, 'Every true Christian has the divine evidence of his being in favor with God.'" "I know likewise that Luther, Melancthon, and many other (if not all) of the reformers, frequently and strongly assert that every believer is conscious of his own acceptance with God, and that by a supernatural evidence."[5]

For his doctrine of Sanctification, Wesley adopted the title of "Perfection," because he found it so used in the Holy Scriptures. Paul and John he deemed sufficient authorities for the use of an epithet, which he knew, however, would be liable to the cavils of criticism. The Christian world had also largely recognized the term in the writings of Clemens Alexandrinus, Macarius, à Kempis, Fenelon, Lucas, and other writers, Papal and Protestant. Besides incessant allusions to the doctrine, in his general writings, he has left an elaborate treatise on it.[6] Fletcher of Madeley, an example as well as an authority of the doctrine, published an essay on it, proving it to be scriptural as well as sanctioned by the best

[5] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii, 415, *et seq.*

[6] Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Works, vol. iv.

theological writers.[7] Wesley's theory of the doctrine is precise and intelligible, though often distorted into perplexing difficulties by both its advocates and opponents. He taught not absolute, nor Angelic, nor Adamic, but "Christian perfection." Each sphere of being has its own normal limits; God alone has absolute perfection; the angels have a perfection of their own above that of humanity, at least of the humanity of our own sphere; unfallen man, represented by Adam, occupied a peculiar sphere in the divine economy, with its own relations to the divine government, its own "perfection," called by Wesley Adamic Perfection; fallen, but regenerated man, has also his peculiar sphere, as a subject of the Mediatorial Economy, and the highest practicable virtue (whatever it may be) in that sphere is its "perfection," its Christian perfection. An able Methodist authority has said, "Every thing which has attained the normal completeness of its own class or kind is rightly called *perfect*. Not after an ideal, but a normal standard, we speak of a *perfect egg*, a *perfect chicken*, a *perfect full-grown fowl*. There may be a perfect child or a perfect man. And everything which is wanting in none of the normal complement of qualities, in normal degree, is *perfect* in its class. Now the Christian who has attained to the description of our formula is at the normal standard of a *perfect* man in Christ. We use an abundantly scriptural term in calling this a state of Christian *perfection*. It is a state in which all the normal qualities of the Christian are permanently, or with more or less continuity, possessed in the proper completeness. And as this spiritual strength and power over and against sin, derived from the Holy Spirit, is *sanctification*, so in the completeness which we

[7] Last Check, etc. Works, vol. ii.

have described it is not improperly perhaps by us called entire sanctification."[8]

Admitting such a theory of perfection, the most important question has respect to its practical limit. When can it be said of a Christian man that he is thus perfect? Wesley taught that perfect Christians "are not free from ignorance, no, nor from mistake. We are no more to expect any man to be infallible than to be omniscient. . . . From infirmities none are perfectly freed till their spirits return to God; neither can we expect, till then, to be wholly freed from temptation; for 'the servant is not above his Master.' But neither in this sense is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, none which does not admit of a continual increase. . . . The proposition which I will hold is this: 'Any person may be cleansed from all sinful tempers, and yet need the atoning blood.' For what? For 'negligences and ignorances;' for both words and actions, (as well as omissions,) which are, in a sense, transgressions of the perfect law. And I believe no one is clear of these till he lays down this corruptible body." Perfection, as defined by Wesley, is not then perfection, according to the absolute moral law; it is perfection according to the special remedial economy introduced by the Atonement, in which the heart, being sanctified, fulfills the law by love, (Rom. xii, 8, 10,) and its involuntary imperfections are provided for, by that economy, without the imputation of guilt, as in the case of infancy and all irresponsible persons. The only question, then, can be, Is it possible for good men so to love God that all their conduct, in-

[8] Rev. Dr. Whedon in "The Bibliotheca Sacra," April, 1862, an article to which the reader can be referred as one of the ablest expositions of Methodist theology, especially in its relations to the Calvinistic controversy.

ward and outward, shall be swayed by love? that even their involuntary defects shall be swayed by it? Is there such a thing as the inspired writer calls the "perfect love" which "casteth out fear?" (1 John iv, 18.) Wesley believed that there is; that it is the privilege of all saints; and that it is to be attained by faith. "I want you to be *all love*," he wrote. "This is the perfection I believe and teach; and this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed, my judgment is, that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high is the most effectual way of driving it out of the world. . . . Man," he says, "in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection. The perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body, is the complying with that kind command, 'My son, give me thy heart!' It is the loving the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." Such is his much misrepresented doctrine of Christian perfection.[9] Wesley taught that this sanctification is usually gradual, but may be instantaneous; as, like justification, it is to be received by faith.

Such are the general and such the special theological characteristics of Methodism. It has in its Anglican Articles a general, though a very brief, platform, consisting of the leading dogmas of the Universal Church. Aside from this, it preaches, especially, Universal Redemption, Assurance, and Perfection. The latter are special to it, not so much as opinions, (for they are still, more or less, common to the Christian world,) but by the special emphasis with which Methodism utters them. They are the staple ideas of its preaching, of its litera-

[9] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii, p. 412.

ture, of its colloquial inquiries in its class-meetings, prayer-meetings, and in the Christian intercourse of its social life. Though, as has been stated, the success of the denomination cannot be explained apart from its disciplinary system and its spiritual energy, yet unquestionably its spiritual life and its practical system could not long subsist without its special theology.

An important and very interesting question, respecting the dogmatic attitude of the new Church, remains to be considered. Of few things, connected with Methodism, does Wesley speak oftener or with more devout gratulation than of its doctrinal liberality. "One circumstance," he says, "is quite peculiar to the people called Methodists; that is, the terms upon which any persons may be admitted into their Society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees. . . . They think, and let think. One condition, and one only, is required—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough; they desire no more; they lay stress upon nothing else; they ask only, 'Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand.'" "Is there," he adds, "any other Society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly of a catholic spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons without distinction? Where is there such another society in Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists." When in his eighty-fifth year, preaching in Glasgow, he wrote: "I subjoined a short account of Methodism, particularly insisting on the circumstance—There is no other religious society under heaven which requires nothing of men, in order to their admission into it, but a desire to

save their souls. Look all round you; you cannot be admitted into the Church, or Society of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion. . . . Now, I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles. Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?" The possible results of such liberality were once discussed in the Conference. Wesley conclusively determined the debate by remarking: "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from me, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off, and begins to shake the powder about my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible." "Is a man," he writes, "a believer in Jesus Christ, and is his life suitable to his profession? are not only the main, but the sole inquiries I make in order to his admission into our Society." Did he design the new American Church to be equally liberal? As the "General Rules," used in England, were retained, after the Christmas Conference, in America, as the "only one condition" of membership, and the "Articles of Religion" are not mentioned in these Rules, but placed apart in the Discipline, are not the articles to be considered rather as an indicatory than an obligatory dogmatic symbol—an indication to sincere men, seeking an asylum for Christian communion, of what kind of teaching they must expect in the new Church, but not of what they would be required to avow by subscription?

The Articles and the General Rules are both parts of the organic or constitutional law of American Methodism; but the General Rules prescribe the "only condition" of membership, without an allusion to the Articles. Conformity to the doctrines of the Church is required by its statute law as a functional qualification for the ministry; but Church members cannot be excluded for personal opinions while their lives conform to the practical discipline of the Church; they can be tried and expelled for "sowing dissensions in the Societies by inveighing against their doctrines or discipline;" that is, in other words, not for their opinions, but for their moral conduct respecting their opinions. They cannot be expelled for anything short of defects, which "are sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory."[10] And at what would Wesley himself have more revolted than the assumption that opinions, not affecting the Christian conduct of a member of his Society, were "sufficient to exclude him from the kingdom of grace and glory?"[11]

[10] Discipline of Methodist Episcopal Church, Part I, chap. 8, § 4.

[11] Such, it will scarcely be questioned, is the right of communion possessed by a person already in the Methodist Episcopal Church; but it has sometimes been a question whether doctrinal opinions are not required for admission by the administrative prescription adopted since Wesley's day, (Discipline, Part I, chap. 2, § 2): "Let none be received until they shall, on examination by the minister in charge before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith and their willingness to keep the rules." It may be replied, 1. That, according to Wesley's definition above, of the faith essential to a true Church, there could be no difficulty here. 2. That, as the requisition is merely an administrative one for the preachers, and prescribes not what are to be "satisfactory assurances," etc., the latter are evidently left to the discretion of the pastor, and the requirement is designed to afford him the opportunity of further instructing the candidate, or of receiving from him pledges that his opinions shall not become a practical abuse in the society. 3. If the rule amounts to more than this, it would probably be pronounced, by good judges of Methodist law, incompatible with the usages and general system of Methodism, an oversight of the General Conference which enacted it, and contrary

This interesting historical fact is full of significance, as an example of that distinction between indicatory and obligatory standards of theological belief which Methodism has, perhaps, had the honor of first exemplifying among the leading Churches of the modern Christian world.

The ecclesiastical system of American Methodism, as reorganized at the Christmas Conference, has been mostly prefigured in the course of our narrative. It was prescribed in Wesley's "Large Minutes," and in the special enactments of the American Minutes; these now continued to constitute the Discipline of the Church, with such modifications as were necessary to adapt it to the new Episcopal organization. It may be expedient, nevertheless, to review it summarily at the present historical crisis of the denomination.

The specially clerical or ministerial bodies of the denomination were now the General, the Annual, and the Quarterly Conferences, the last, however, including its official Laymen.

The Christmas Conference was the first General Conference; that is to say, all the Annual Conferences were supposed to be there assembled. It was, therefore, the supreme judicatory of the Church. It was not yet a delegated body, but the whole ministry in session. It made no provision for any future session of the kind; but for some years legislative enactments were made, as heretofore: every new measure being submitted to each Annual Conference by the superintendents, and the majority of all being necessary to its validity. Another

to the "General Rules," as guarded by the Restrictive Rules. 4. It would be a singular and inconsistent fact, that opinions should be made a condition of admission to the Church, but not of responsibility (except in their practical abuse) with persons already *in* the Church. (See History of the Religious Movement, etc., vol. ii, p. 448.)

General Conference was held, however, in 1792, no official minutes of which are extant.[12] The third session was held in 1796, a compendium of the minutes of which was published. Thereafter a session has been held regularly every four years, and the minutes of each preserved. In the session of 1808 a motion was adopted for the better organization of the Conference as a "delegated" body. In 1812 it met in New York City as a "Delegated General Conference," under constitutional restrictions, which gave it the character of a renewed organization. The year 1812, then, will be the appropriate period for the consideration of the peculiar character and functions of the General Conference.

Until the appointment of stated or regular General Conferences, the Annual Conferences continued to be considered local or sectional meetings of the one undivided ministry, held in different localities, for the local convenience of its members, every general or legislative measure being submitted, as we have seen, to all the sessions before it could become law. Down to 1784 there had been but two regular sessions a year announced, though more were sometimes irregularly held. The enlargement of the denomination now required more annual sessions; three were appointed for 1785: one in Maryland, one in Virginia, and one in North Carolina. These sufficed till 1788, when six were held. The next year they increased to eleven, and in 1790 to fourteen, two being held beyond the Alleghanies.

The Annual Conference was therefore still the supreme assembly of the Church, except when, by its appoint-

[12] "The Minutes of the General Conference of 1792 were never printed, to my knowledge, nor can I find the original copy." Dr. M'Clintock's preface to the collected "Journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. i, p. 4. New York. 1855.

ment, a General Conference, that is to say, a collective assembly of the Annual Conferences should intervene.

These annual assemblies became imposing occasions. A bishop presided; the preachers, from many miles around, usually including several states, were present; hosts of laymen were spectators. There was preaching in the early morning, in the afternoon, and at night. The daily proceedings were introduced with religious services, and were characterized by an impressive religious spirit. They continued usually a week, and it was a jubilatic week, gathering the war-worn heroes of many distant and hard-fought fields, renewing the intimacies of preachers and people, and crowned alike by social hospitalities and joyous devotions. They had their particular regulations prescribed in the Minutes or Discipline. "It is desired," say their Rules, "that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart. How may we best improve the time of our Conferences? While we are conversing let us have an especial care to set God always before us. In the intermediate hours let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labor."

The proceedings of the Annual Conference were conducted in the form of questions and answers, as follows: "What preachers are admitted? Who remain on trial? Who are admitted on trial? Who desist from traveling? Are there any objections to any of the preachers? who are named one by one. How are the preachers stationed this year? What numbers are in the Society? What was contributed for the contingent expenses? How was this expended? What is contributed toward the fund for the superannuated preachers, and

the widows and orphans of the preachers? What demands are there upon it? How many preachers' wives are to be provided for? By what circuits, and in what proportion? Where and when may our next Conference begin? How can we provide for superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers?"[13] The presiding bishop made out the appointments to circuits, for the next ecclesiastical year, of all the preachers within the territory of the Conference. He had no "cabinet" of presiding elders, for this office was yet unknown in the Church; as the new elders, ordained at the Christmas Conference, were appointed only to administer the sacraments. At the close of the Conference, after singing and prayer, he read to a crowded house, and amid breathless stillness and deep solemnity, the "list of appointments;" most if not all the appointed preachers having had no previous knowledge of the fate thus assigned them for the ensuing year. Many of them were torn up by it from endeared localities and sent to distant, often to hostile and perilous fields. The reading of the list was like the announcement of an order of battle. It was heard by the militant itinerants with ejaculations of prayer, with sobs, and shouts. Few, if any, revolted. The post of greatest difficulty was considered the post of greatest honor. The list ended, the Doxology, sung to Old Hundred by preachers and people, rung through the church, and reverberated through the neighborhood; the apostolic benediction was pronounced, and, usually, before the sun went down; but sometimes at the midnight hour the itinerant band and their bishop, after many an affecting leave-taking, were in the saddle, hastening to

[13] The "Large Minutes," the original form of this outline, significantly says here, "those who can preach four or five times a week are supernumerary preachers."

their new fields of combat and triumph. Few or no scenes of early Methodism were more heroic or more affecting than its Annual Conferences.

The Quarterly Conference was a still more local body, held, in accordance with its title, on each circuit once in three months, and was composed of the preachers of the circuit, its local preachers, exhorters, leaders, stewards, and later, its Trustees and Sunday-school superintendents. It had, subordinately to the Annual Conference, jurisdiction over all the interests of the circuit: its finances, the authorization of its local preachers and exhorters, and later, a class of judicial appeals, and the recommendation of candidates for the Annual Conferences. Its exercises were largely, mostly indeed, spiritual. It continued in session about two days, during which there were almost continual sessions, sermons, prayer-meetings, or love-feasts. The Methodist families of the circuit, often from the distance of many miles, assembled at it, making it a great religious festival. The town or village was crowded with people, horses, and carriages. It was an occasion of lavish hospitality, of social and religious rejoicing and gratulation. The chapels could seldom accommodate the people; the religious services were often held in groves. "Revivals" of religion were the generally expected result; the unity, the hospitality, and social intimacy of the Methodists of the circuit were the invariable result. Aged Methodists have not ceased to regret the decay of these primitive festivals, not considering that it has been the normal effect of the prosperity of the Church, by which it has become necessary to divide and subdivide the circuits, thereby diminishing the range and importance of their respective Quarterly Meetings. Camp-meetings have served somewhat to continue the social and spiritual festivities of the old Quarterly Meetings.

The ministry now consisted of bishops, (instead of the former "general assistant,") "assistants," and "helpers;" for though the new titles of elders and deacons appear in the Minutes of the next year, the ordained men amount to but twenty-four, out of a hundred and four. These were designed to supply the sacraments to the Societies, as far as practicable; subsequently the elders were placed in charge of districts comprehending several circuits, and thence arose the permanent office of presiding elder, not for the administration of the sacraments, but for many and important executive functions, as we shall hereafter see. In time, all preachers on their admission to the Conference as members were ordained deacons, and, in two years more, elders. The titles "assistants" and "helpers" were then dropped.

The functions of the bishop have been mostly defined. His powers were extraordinary, almost plenary; but he was subjected to an extraordinary amenability. Besides presiding in the Conferences, he made absolutely the appointments, or annual distribution of the preachers, having yet no "cabinet" of presiding elders, a species of council which usage has since established, though it has no recognition in the Discipline. In the intervals of the Conference he could receive, change, or suspend preachers. He decided finally appeals from both preachers and people. Ordinations depended upon the vote of a majority of the Conference; but the bishop had a veto power over any such vote. He could unite two or more Annual Conferences, and appointed the times and places of their sessions.[14] But he could be deposed, as we have seen, and expelled from the Church not only for crime,

[14] So at least the next General Conference (1792) declared. The Annual Conferences were at this time called District Conferences. The power to appoint the places (but not the times) of the session was given to the Conferences in 1804.

but for "improper conduct," a liability to which no other preacher, nor the lowliest private member, was exposed. He had no higher salary than his ministerial brethren; he was allowed no local diocese, but must travel through the denomination.

The "assistant" was really the "preacher in charge" of the circuit, as he was subsequently called. He was esteemed the assistant of the bishop, and had charge of the other preachers on the circuit as his "helpers." His duties were minutely enumerated in 1784. He was "to see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well and want nothing; to renew the tickets quarterly, and regulate the bands; to take in or put out of the Society or the bands; to appoint all the stewards and leaders, and change them when he sees it necessary; to keep watch-nights and love-feasts; to hold Quarterly Meetings, and therein diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each Society; to take care that every Society be duly supplied with books, particularly with 'Kempis,' 'Instructions for Children,' and the 'Primitive Physic,' which ought to be in every house; to take exact lists of his Societies, and bring them to the Conference; to send an account of his circuit every half year to one of the superintendents; to meet the married men and women, and the single men and women in the large Societies once a quarter; to overlook the accounts of all the stewards; to take a regular catalogue of his Societies as they live in house-row; to leave his successor a particular account of the state of the circuit; vigorously, but calmly, to enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments, and drams;[15] as soon as there are four

[15] Wesley's rule included snuff and tobacco; but this was too strong for the American preachers, many of whom (including Asbury) used the weed.

men or women believers in any place, to put them into a band; to suffer no love-feast to last above an hour and a half; everywhere to recommend decency and cleanliness; to read the rules of the Society, with the aid of his helpers, once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every Society."

All preachers, except the bishops and assistants, were called "helpers," whether members or probationers of the Conference. The Christmas session defined the duties of a helper to be, 1. To preach. 2. To meet the Society and the bands weekly. 3. To visit the sick. 4. To meet the leaders weekly." It was added, "Let every preacher be particularly exact in this, and in morning preaching. If he has twenty hearers, let him preach. We are fully determined never to drop morning preaching; and to preach at five A.M., wherever it is practicable." The helper was not allowed, "on any pretense," to administer the Lord's supper; nor to "read the morning and evening service" in the congregation, except when authorized by a written direction from a bishop.

As all the preachers belonged to the class of Helpers in the outset, the ministerial regimen enjoined upon them may be considered as that of the ministry in general. It was prescribed by Wesley, and is singularly minute. The "rules of a helper" were, "1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary. 2. Be serious. Let your motto be, 'Holiness to the Lord.' Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking. 3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly with young women. 4. Take no step toward marriage without first consulting with your brethren. 5. Believe evil of no

one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side. 6. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned. 7. Tell every one who is under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and tempers, and that plainly, as soon as may be; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom. 8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all. 9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbor's. 10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake. 11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline! Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you! 12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly in preaching and visiting from house to

house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labor with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory." These were the famous "Twelve Rules" of the Helpers. Others were added, among which were the following: "When they meet let them never part without prayer. Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts. Let them never speak slightingly of each other in any kind. Let them defend one another's characters in everything, so far as consists with truth; and, let them labor in honor each to prefer the other before himself."

Some emendations were early made in this singular code. About two years later the severely disciplined helper was permitted to change his daily morning service from five to six o'clock in winter. Wesley's favorite rule of early morning preaching was never successfully enforced in America; in 1789 it appears significantly ambiguous: the helper is "to preach in the morning where he can get hearers;" and in 1804 this early service is only "recommended." In 1786 the sentences relating to the "character of a gentleman," a "dancing-master," and the "cleaning of shoes," disappear; and in 1789 that about "fetching wood and drawing water" are consigned to the same oblivious limbo.

The Conference adopted Wesley's rule respecting the authorization of "those who think they are called of the Holy Ghost to preach." "Inquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? 2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound un-

derstanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching? As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is 'moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.'" The reception of a helper, or new preacher, as a probationer in the Conference was attended with severe questions and some ceremony. The day was observed by the Conference with fasting and prayer. "Every person proposed shall then be asked (with any other questions which may be thought necessary by the Conference) the following, namely, Have you faith in Christ? Are you 'going on to perfection?' Do you expect to be 'perfected in love' in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to his work? Do you know the Methodist plan? Do you know the rules of the Society? of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no drams? Do you constantly attend the sacrament? Have you read the 'Minutes of the Conference?' Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the rules of a helper; especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning at five o'clock wherever you can have twenty hearers? Will you endeavor not to speak too long or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting both by precept and example? Are you in debt? We may then, if he gives satisfaction, receive him as a pro-

bationer, by giving him the 'Minutes of the Conference,' inscribed thus: 'To A. B. You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer.' Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein that if he has any doubt it may be removed. After two years' probation, being recommended by the assistant, and examined by the Conference, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the 'Minutes,' inscribed thus: 'As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by, these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer.' Meantime let none preach or exhort in any of our Societies without a note of permission from the assistant. Let every preacher or exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let every assistant insist upon it."

Abundant and characteristic, not only of Wesley, but of the primitive Methodist ministry in general, are the rules of ministerial life scattered through the Discipline of the Christmas Conference. They are historical exponents of the Methodism of the times, and to no small extent afford a solution of the problem of its great success. "We are raised up," they said, "to reform the continent and to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." Therefore they resolved to maintain "field preaching," "because our call is to save that which is lost. Now, we cannot expect them to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them. Because we are particularly called, by 'going into the highways and hedges,' 'to compel them to come in.' Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the Gospel; every Sunday in particular; especially where there are old Societies, lest they settle upon their lees." But they ask, "What

avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every traveling preacher must, instruct them from house to house." And, "Let every preacher, having a catalogue of those in each Society, go to each house, and deal gently with them, that the report of it may move others to desire your coming. Do this in earnest, and you will soon find what a work you take in hand in undertaking to be a traveling preacher!" "Do not Sabbath-breaking, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness, or gayety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, still prevail in several places? How may these evils be remedied? 1. Let us preach expressly on each of these heads. 2. Read in every Society the 'Sermon on Evil Speaking.' 3. Let the leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. 4. Let the preacher warn every Society that none who is guilty herein can remain with us. 5. Extirpate smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, out of every Society. Let none remain with us who will not totally abstain from every kind and degree of it. 6. Extirpate bribery, receiving anything, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Show no respect of persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing." "As often as possible rise at four. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scriptures with Mr. Wesley's Notes, partly the closely practical parts of what he has published. From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) read in order, with much prayer, 'The Christian Library,' and other pious books. Why is it that the people under our care are no better? Other reasons may concur; but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more

holy. But why are we not more knowing? Because we are idle. We forget our very first rule, 'Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.' Which of you spends as many hours a day in God's work as you did formerly in man's work? We talk, or read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how? Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in four and twenty. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade. 'But I have no books.' We desire the assistants will take care that all the large Societies provide Mr. Wesley's Works for the use of the preachers. In the afternoon follow Mr. Baxter's plan" of pastoral visitation. "Then you will have no time to spare; you will have work enough for all your time. Then, likewise, no preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has lost its savor. For to such this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you can procure. The sum is, Go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians inwardly and outwardly. Make every particular plain to their understanding; fix it in their memory; write it on their heart. In order to this, there must be 'line upon line, precept upon precept.' What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this! But what shall we do for the rising generation? Who will labor for them? Let him who is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now. 1. Where there are ten children, whose parents are in Society, meet them at least an hour

every week. 2. Talk with them every time you see any at home. 3. Pray in earnest for them. 4. Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses. 5. Preach expressly on education. 'But I have no gift for this.' Gift or no gift, you are to do it; else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use the means for it. Why are not we more holy? Why do not we live in eternity; walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God; breathing the whole spirit of missionaries? Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end without using the means. To touch only upon two or three instances: Who of you rises at four or even at five, when he does not preach? Do you recommend to all our Societies the five o'clock hour for private prayer? Do you observe it, or any other fixed time? Do not you find, by experience, that any time is no time? Do you know the obligation and benefit of fasting? How often do you practice it? The neglect of this alone is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God by the habitual neglect of a plain duty! Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death. Begin precisely at the time appointed. Let your whole deportment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn. Always suit your subject to your audience. Choose the plainest texts you can. Take care not to ramble; but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation. Sing no hymns of your own composing. Print nothing without the approbation of one or other of the superintendents. Do not usually pray extempore above eight or ten min-

utes (at most) without intermission. And let young preachers often exhort without taking a text. Always kneel during public prayer. Everywhere avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion. Beware of clownishness. Be courteous to all. Be merciful to your beast. Not only ride moderately, but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed and fed." "Do we sufficiently watch over each other? We do not. Should we not frequently ask each other, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which the Conference advises? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? Do you use private prayer every morning and evening? if you can, at five in the evening; and the hour before or after morning preaching? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours? Do you retire at five o'clock? Have you a New Testament always about you?" "Do not you converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view; and to pray before and after it? Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honor? Are you temperate in all things? instance in food; do you use only that kind and that degree which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers? Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul? Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? to-day? How often do you drink wine?

every day? Do you want it?" "Be active in dispersing Mr. Wesley's books. Every assistant may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor. Strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to 'go on to perfection.'"

Besides this system of ministerial assemblies, functions, and regimen, American Methodism consisted, first, of local or individual societies, composed of members and probationers, divided into classes of twelve or more persons, and meeting weekly under the care of a class-leader for religious counsel and the contribution of money for the support of the Church according to the General Rules.[16] The leaders were met at first weekly, afterward monthly, by the preacher. Each Society had its trustees holding the chapel property; its stewards having charge of its other finances; and, in many cases, its licensed exhorters and local preachers, men who pursued secular avocations but labored as public teachers whenever they found opportunity. The exhorter usually graduated to the office of local preacher, and thence to the traveling ministry. This, in fine, was the recruiting process of the Annual Conference. Secondly, of circuits composing a group of many local Societies, extending in some cases five hundred miles, requiring from two to six or more weeks to travel around them, and supplied by an "assistant" and two or three "helpers," who were aided by the local preachers, the class-leaders maintaining a minute pastoral oversight in the Societies during the absence of the itinerants. Thirdly, (though at a somewhat later date,) of districts comprising several circuits and superintended by a Presiding Elder.

[16] See the "General Rules," the fundamental moral code for Church members. (Dis., p. 27, 1864.) "Bands" were also common in the Church at this early day, but have become obsolete. They were similar to the classes, but designed for more intimate spiritual counsel.

Thus had the new Church assumed an organic form: its series of synodal bodies, extending from the fourth of a year to four years, from the local circuit to the whole nation; its series of pastoral functionaries, class-leaders, exhorters, local preachers, circuit preachers, district preachers or presiding elders, and bishops whose common diocese was the entire country; its prayer-meetings, band-meetings, class-meetings, love-feasts, and almost daily preaching; its liturgy, articles of religion, psalmody, and singularly minute moral discipline, as prescribed in its "general rules" and ministerial regimen. Its system was remarkably precise and consecutive, and, as seen in our day by its results, as remarkably effective. Down to the Christmas Conference it had been for nearly a score of years in its forming process. I have deemed it expedient, therefore, to trace with much detail this important period of its history, for, its foundations and early interior structure being ascertained, its superstructure, as it rises and extends over the land, will be the more readily measured.

American Methodism is now to enter a new historic career, a career of unparalleled success. From its very birth till near the present date it has been struggling, advancing, or retreating, amid the agitations and obstructions of the American Revolution. Its whole history, before the arrival of Coke, wears an aspect of vagueness, of uncertainty. Its dim and incoherent events, interesting though they may be, as antiquarian reminiscences, fail of higher interest by failing of more intimate mutual relations, and of more historic proportions. Hereafter it is to proceed with a definitive and more historic scope. Asbury and other men, heretofore only occasional or irregular leaders, rise into the character of heroes of the scene; great measures, great tri-

umphs, great men crowd it—a series of apostolic bishops, not a few extraordinary "pulpit orators," missionaries to the savages, the slaves, to foreign nations, an unequaled publishing agency, provisions of education, with academies and colleges in most, if not all, the multiplying states of the Union; the advance of the denomination into New England, into Canada, over the Alleghanies, through the length and breadth of the Valley of the Mississippi, over the Rocky Mountains, to the shores of the Pacific; foreign evangelization, reaching to many of the ends of the earth, and unequaled numerical growth. We have passed through about eighteen years, and the statistics of the forming denomination show less than fifteen thousand members, and about eighty preachers; in the next score they are to advance to more than a hundred and thirteen thousand members, and four hundred preachers; and the one Conference, with its two annual sessions, is to multiply into many, extending from Maine to Georgia, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. In some single years, within this period, the increase of members is to equal the whole numerical force reported at the close of these years of preliminary labor and suffering. The important event which is to secure to the new denomination such results, the "Christmas Conference," forms the appropriate conclusion of our present period, and the legitimate starting-point of all the remaining history of American Methodism.

BOOK IV.

FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH TO THE FIRST REGULAR GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1785–1792.

CHAPTER I.

EPISCOPAL TRAVELS OF COKE AND ASBURY, FROM THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE TO THE FIRST REGULAR GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1785–1792.

The New Church — Its Statistical Strength — Its Territorial Range — General Approval of the New Organization — Coke Journeying Northward — Southward — Perils and Adventures — Jarratt and Slavery — Primitive Quarterly Meetings — Contests with Slavery — First Conference in North Carolina — Coke and Asbury Dining with Washington — Position of the Church on Slavery — Its Failure — Coke Returns to Europe — Asbury Itinerating — In Charleston — Lays the Corner-stone of Cokesbury College — Sketch of the Institution — Its Destruction by Fire — Coke in Europe — He is Attacked by Charles Wesley — Vindicated by John Wesley — Projects Methodist Missions — The Wesleyan Mission Scheme an Inspiration of the Christmas Conference — Coke Sails with Missionaries for Nova Scotia — Providential Adversities — Sublime Results — West India Methodist Missions — "Emancipation Eve" — Coke at the First South Carolina Conference — Methodism in the Farther South — Coke Itinerating — Re-embarks for Europe — Asbury Itinerating — Is Mobbed in Charleston — First Conference in Georgia — Asbury Crosses the Alleghanies — First Conference beyond the Mountains — Conference in Western Pennsylvania — First Ordination in the Valley of the Mississippi — Other Conferences — Proposed Seminary in Georgia — First Conference in New Jersey — Coke Returns to Europe — Asbury — Coke again in America — Usefulness of a Tract — Death of Wesley — Coke Embarks for England — Returns to America.

THE little ecclesiastical bark, built amid such troubled auspices, was now fairly launched upon the subsiding

tumults of the country. Methodism presented itself to the new nation, an Episcopal Church, with all the necessary functions and functionaries of such a body; the only one, of Protestant denomination, now in the nation, for the colonial fragments of the English Establishment had not yet been reorganized.[1]

The new Church had now eighteen thousand members, and one hundred and four itinerant preachers, besides some hundreds of local preachers and exhorters, who were incessantly laboring in its service.[2] The number of its habitual hearers or adherents, aside from its members, was greater, in proportion to its actual members, than at any subsequent period of its history, for many of the members of the English Church in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia now had no other ministry than that of the Methodist itinerancy. The novelty of the methods, if not the teachings of the new denomination, attracted the people in extraordinary multitudes, and the long intervals at which the itinerants returned to any one place, on their four-weeks' and six-weeks' circuits, did not allow the popular interest readily to subside. Their congregations, whether in chapels, barns, or groves, were the largest in the country. It would be safe to estimate the Methodist community at this time at about two hundred thousand, including, besides actual members, habitual attendants on its worship. It had more than sixty chapels, the names of which are recorded, and which were regularly used in its service,[3] but

[1] Their first general convention for reorganization was not held till the autumn of 1785, and the Episcopal consecration of Coke for America by Wesley was prior to that of Seabury by the Scotch nonjuring bishops.

[2] The statistics of the next Minutes after the Christmas Conference.

[3] Lednum enumerates them, p. 417. "They had founded a number of chapels, such as Wesley Chapel in New York, one in New Jersey, in

these were a small proportion of even its regular preaching places. Wherever it found human beings it found sanctuaries, in log-cabins, barns, or forests. It had organized Societies in the State of New York as far north as Ashgrove, on Long Island, and on Staten Island. In every county of West Jersey it had them, and in several counties of East Jersey. In Pennsylvania it had them, not only in Philadelphia, but in Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, Lancaster, Berks, and York Counties, and in the southern tier of counties as far as Bedford; and it had carried its standard across the Alleghanies and planted it in the Redstone settlement. It was also extending its march rapidly up the Juniata. It had established itself strongly in every county of Maryland and Delaware, and was already the dominant popular religious power in these states. In Virginia it had not only unfurled its banner, but planted it in impregnable positions in almost

1773, supposed to be Bethel, in Gloucester County—the New Mills House—one in Trenton, and a fourth in Salem. In Pennsylvania they had bought St. George's, were using Bethel in Montgomery; also Old Forest, in Berks; had erected Benson's, and the Valley, or Grove, in Chester County. In Delaware, Forrest or Thomas's, Barratt's, White's Chapel, Bethel and Moore's, in Sussex County; Cloud's, Blackiston's, Friendship, in Thoroughfare Neck, and Wesley Chapel, in Dover. In Maryland, the Pipe, or Sam's Creek, Bush Forrest, Gunpowder, Black River Neck, Middle River Neck, Fell's Point, one in Baltimoretown, Kent Meeting-house, Mountain Meeting-house, Bennett's, Hunt's, Deer Creek, Dudley's, Tuckahoe, Quantico, Annamessex Chapel, and one still lower in Somerset County, Lino Chapel, Bolingbroke Chapel, Newtown-Chester, or Chestertown Chapel, and Werton Chapel. In Virginia, Yeargin's, Lane's, Boisseau's, Mabry's, Merritt's, Easlin's, White's, Stony Hill, Mumpin's, Rose Creek, Adams's, Ellis's, Mason's, Howel's, Nansemond, and some sort of houses in Norfolk and Portsmouth. In North Carolina, Nutbush, Cypress, Pope's, Taylor's, Henley's, Lee's, Watson's, Parish's, and Jones's. Here were more than sixty houses of worship claimed and occupied by the Methodists. True, they were humble temples, none of them were stuccoed or frescoed; and yet the *mystic shekinah, the glory*, was manifested in them."

every county east of the Alleghanies, and was bearing it successfully to the heights of the western mountains. It had crossed them at one point at least, and its joyous melodies were sounding at the headwaters of the Holston, and evoking welcoming echoes from its emigrant people in the primeval forests of Tennessee and Kentucky. With the exception of some of the south-western, and a few of the south-eastern counties of North Carolina, it had extended over that state, and had won important fields in South Carolina and Georgia, whither preachers were dispatched the next year.

The new Episcopal organization appears to have been quite unanimously approved by the Methodists. Watters assures us that in the Christmas Conference, which adopted it, there was not one dissenting voice.[4] I know of no recorded dissent in the entire Church of that day. The people flocked to the newly ordained preachers for the sacraments, of which they had so long been deprived. The labor of baptizing their children became onerous to the itinerants; hundreds were sometimes thus consecrated at a single meeting. Doubtless some of the adherents of the English Church, who had favored Methodism, now retired from its assemblies, and the devoted Jarratt could not sacrifice his churchly prejudices for the new and providential order of things. He treated Coke and his Wesleyan credentials with ill temper, if not with contempt; and his useful co-operation with the Methodists wavered, if it did not turn into caviling opposition; but he could never break away from the magic influence and friendship of Asbury, and we shall see the latter preaching his funeral sermon, and weeping tears of affectionate remembrance over his grave.

With liberty and peace in the land, and organized order

[4] Life, p. 104.

in the Church, the itinerants dispersed from the Christmas Conference to resume their labors with a confidence and hopefulness such as they had never known before. They had fought a good fight, had kept the faith, had outridden the storms of the Revolutionary War, and now the whole opening continent, illuminated with the gladness of a new era of freedom and prosperity, lay before them. The heroic era of the country had become the heroic period of the Church, and the humblest itinerant felt the greatness of the epoch.

Coke spent five months in the states, after the Christmas Conference, laboring incessantly. He was not content with the organization of the Church, but, as we have seen, projected, with Asbury, its first educational institution, and, while the Christmas Conference was yet in session, made arrangements and begged funds for the mission of Garrettson to Nova Scotia. After one of his sermons, at the session, he took up a collection of about a hundred and fifty dollars for it. On the 3d of January he left the city and rested for the night at Perry Hall, but was away the next morning for the North. At Abingdon he "gave orders that the materials for the erection of the college should be procured forthwith." He crossed the Susquehanna on the ice, and spent more than ten days in Philadelphia rejoicing as "perfectly at home" among its zealous Methodists. He spent three weeks in New York, preaching, publishing his sermons, delivered before the Conference in Baltimore, and collecting funds for Nova Scotia. Early in February he passed rapidly through New Jersey, preaching almost daily. Arriving again at Philadelphia, he records: "They are now going in reality to repair our Chapel here: the scaffolding is already put up. I have united above a hundred, I think, in band, and they seem

to be in good earnest about it, determined to meet. There is certainly a considerable revival in this city."

He hastens through Delaware, still preaching by day and by night, and, in the last week of the month, finds shelter again in the home of Gough. He spends a week laboring in Baltimore. "The work of God," he writes, "does indeed prosper in this town. The Preaching-house will not contain even my week-day's congregations; and at five in the morning the Chapel is about half full. I think I have prevailed on our friends in this place to build a new church. They have already subscribed about five hundred pounds sterling. I have now formed the believers into bands."

It was now that the Lovely Lane Chapel was sold, and the noted Light-street Church begun. The latter was adjacent to the existing church of that name, being on the corner of Vine Alley and Light-street. Ten years later it was burnt down, and in 1797 Asbury opened the present edifice. Breaking away from this stronghold of Methodism, Coke directed his course southward. "I must post on," he writes, "as fast as I can for between two and three hundred miles." He meets with many adventures in these new regions, and has hairbreadth escapes; sometimes wandering ten miles from his route in the woods, at others wading dangerous streams, or carried down their currents. "I had two runs of water," he says, "to cross between Alexandria and Colchester. When I came to the second (which was perhaps two hours after I had crossed the first) I found that I had two streams to pass. The first I went over without much danger; but in crossing the second, which was very strong and very deep, I did not observe that a tree, brought down by the flood, lay across the landing-place. I endeavored, but in vain, to drive my horse against the

stream, and go round the tree. I was afraid to turn my horse's head to the stream, and afraid to go back. In this dilemma I thought it most prudent for me to lay hold on the tree, and go over it, the water being shallow on the other side of the tree. But I did not advert to the danger of loosening the tree from its hold; for no sooner did I execute my purpose so far as to lay hold of the tree, and that instant the horse was carried from under me, but the motion that I gave it loosened it, and down the stream it instantly carried me. Some distance off there grew a tree in the middle of the stream, the root of which had formed a little bank or island, and divided the stream, and here the tree which I held was stopped. Instantly there came down with the flood a large branch of a tree upon my back, which was so heavy that I was afraid it would break my back. I was now jammed up for a considerable time, (a few minutes appeared long at such a season,) expecting that my strength would soon be exhausted, and I should drop between the tree and the branch. Here I pleaded aloud with God in good earnest. One promise, which I particularly urged, I remember well, 'Lo, I will be with you alway, even to the end of the world.' I felt no fear at all of the pain of dying, or of death itself, or of hell, and yet I found an unwillingness to die. All my castles which I had built in the air for the benefit of my fellow-creatures passed in array before my mind, and I could not consent to give them up. It was an awful time. However, through the blessing of my almighty Preserver, to whom be all the glory, I at last got my knee, which I long endeavored at in vain, on the tree, which I grasped, and then soon disengaged myself, and climbed up the little bank. Here I panted for breath for some time; and when I recovered, perceiving the water between the

little island and the shore not to be very deep, or very strong, I ventured through it, and got to land. I was now obliged to walk about a mile, shivering, before I came to a house. The master and mistress were from home, and were not expected to return that night. But the principal negro lent me an old ragged shirt, coat, waistcoat, breeches, etc., and the negroes made a large fire, and hung my clothes up to dry all night. Before bed-time a man, who came to the run on a small horse, and perceived mine near the brook, concluded the rider was drowned, and wanting to cross the stream on urgent business, mounted my horse, and being well acquainted with the run, came over safe. He then perceived the footsteps of a person on the side of the water, and concluded they were made by the owner of the horse, and following the track, brought horse and bags safe to me. As he seemed to be a poor man I gave him half a guinea. At night I lay on a bed on the ground, and my strength having been so exhausted, slept soundly all the night. Thus was I wonderfully preserved, and I trust shall never forget so awful but very instructive a scene."

He had given away his money so liberally at the Conference that he was now nearly out of funds, but pressed forward alone and among strangers. Arriving at Portsmouth, Va., March 15, he writes: "Here I got into my work, blessed be God! having only part of a dollar left, and preached to an attentive but chiefly unawakened congregation, and baptized." He penetrates into North Carolina, returns to Virginia, and again to North Carolina, inspecting the new circuits, inspiriting the Societies and preachers, and baptizing their children. At Roanoke Chapel he meets Jarratt, who disputes the expediency of the rule of the late Con-

ference on slavery. "The secret is," says Coke, that "he has twenty-four slaves of his own; I am afraid he will do infinite hurt by his opposition to our rules." Two days later he writes: "I now begin to venture to exhort our Societies to emancipate their slaves." We have noticed the stringent measures taken by the Conference against slavery. Coke now, in the midst of the barbarous evil, boldly expounded and defended these rules in the largest gatherings of the people. "The Quarterly Meetings on this continent," he writes, "are much attended. The brethren for twenty miles around, and sometimes for thirty or forty, meet together. The meeting always lasts two days. All the traveling preachers in the circuit are present, and they, with perhaps a local preacher or two, give the people a sermon one after another, besides the love-feast, and now the sacrament. On Saturday, April 9th, I set off with the friends to Brother Martin's, in whose barn I preached that day. The next day I administered the sacrament to a large company, and preached, and after me the two traveling preachers. We had now been six hours and a half engaged in duty, and I had published myself to preach in the neighborhood for the three following days, so they deferred the second love-feast till Wednesday. There were thirty strangers, I think, in Brother Martin's house only, which obliged us to lie three in a bed. I had now for the first time a very little persecution. The testimony I bore in this place against slaveholding provoked many of the unawakened to retire out of the barn, and to combine together to flog me (so they expressed it) as soon as I came out. A high-headed lady also went out and told the rioters, as I was afterward informed, that she would give fifty pounds if they would give that little doctor one hundred lashes. When I came out they sur-

rounded me, but had only power to talk. Brother Martin is a Justice of the Peace, and seized one of them; and Colonel Taylor, a fine, strong man, who has lately joined us, but is only half awakened, was setting himself in a posture of fighting. But God restrained the rage of the multitude. Our Brother Martin has done gloriously, for he has fully and immediately emancipated fifteen slaves. And that sermon which made so much noise has so affected one of our brethren (Norton) that he came to Martin, and desired him to draw up a proper instrument for the emancipation of his eight slaves. A brother, whose name is Ragland, has also emancipated one. Monday, 11th. I preached at Brother Baker's. Here a mob came to meet me with staves and clubs. Their plan, I believe, was to fall upon me as soon as I touched on the subject of slavery. I knew nothing of it till I had done preaching. But not seeing it my duty to touch on the subject here, their scheme was defeated, and they suffered me to pass through them without molestation. Tuesday, 12. I rode to Brother Kennon's, preaching a funeral sermon on the way at a planter's house. Brother Kennon has emancipated twenty-two slaves. These are great sacrifices, for the slaves are worth, I suppose, upon an average, thirty or forty pounds sterling each, and perhaps more. Thursday, 14. We rode about forty miles to a brother of Mr. Kennon. There are nine of the family in Society. I have now done with my testimony against slavery for a time, being got into North Carolina, the laws of this state forbidding any to emancipate their negroes. Tuesday, 19. We came to Brother Greenhill's, where we held our Conference. There were about twenty preachers, or more, in one house, and by laying beds on the floors there was room for all. We spent three days, from Wednesday to Fri-

day inclusive, in Conference, and a comfortable time we had together. In this division we have had an increase of nine hundred and ninety-one this year, and have stretched our borders into Georgia. Beverly Allen has all Georgia to range in. We also sent an elder and a preacher to South Carolina. Mr. Asbury has met with great encouragement in his visit to Charleston. A merchant (Mr. Wells) opened his house to him, and was convinced and justified before he went away. We have now one hundred and ten members in that state by the assiduity of a local preacher who lately settled there. We have also drawn up a petition to the General Assembly of North Carolina, signed by the Conference, entreating them to pass an act to authorize those who are so disposed to emancipate their slaves. Mr. Asbury has visited the governor, and has gained him over."

This was the first Conference held in North Carolina. Asbury was present. He says it was held at "Brother G. Hill's," not "Greenhill's," as Coke records. It was "held in great peace," adds Asbury. As soon as the session was over Coke hastened into Virginia, where he could again denounce slavery, and he did so courageously. "On Sunday, May 1," he says, "about twenty preachers met Mr. Asbury and me at Brother Mason's. One night we all slept at the same house, but it was so inconvenient to some of the preachers, that they afterward divided themselves through the neighboring plantations, by which we lost about an hour in the mornings. A great many principal friends met us here to insist on a repeal of the slave rules; but when they found that we had thoughts of withdrawing ourselves entirely from the circuit, on account of the violent spirit of some leading men, they drew in their horns, and sent us a very humble letter, entreating that preachers might be appointed

for their circuit. We have increased about two hundred in this division in the course of the last year. After mature consideration we formed a petition, a copy of which was given to every preacher, entreating the General Assembly of Virginia to pass a law for the immediate or gradual emancipation of all the slaves. It is to be signed by all the freeholders we can procure, and those I believe will not be few. There have been many debates already on the subject in the Assembly. Many of our friends, and some of the great men of the states, have been inciting us to apply for acts of incorporation, but I have discouraged it, and have prevailed. We have a better staff to lean upon than any this world can afford. We can truly say, 'The harvest is great, but the laborers are few.'"

He goes westward till he sees the Blue Ridge, and returning, travels with Asbury to Mount Vernon, where they dine, by appointment, with Washington. "He received us," says Coke, "very politely, and was very open to access. He is quite the plain country gentleman. After dinner we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came, presenting to him our petition for the emancipation of the negroes, and entreating his signature, if the eminence of his station did not render it inexpedient for him to sign any petition. He informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts on the subject to most of the great men of the State; that he did not see it proper to sign the petition, but if the Assembly took it into consideration, would signify his sentiments to the Assembly by a letter. He asked us to spend the evening and lodge at his house, but our engagement at Annapolis the following day would not admit of it."

Such was the interest of the young Church against

slavery; it seemed, as by a divine inspiration, to be conscious, from the beginning, of the importance of this question to the religious and political wellbeing of the new nation. Ever since its Conference of 1780, it had uttered its voice against the evil. Down to our day it has not failed one hour to bear its recorded testimony in favor of the "extirpation" of the unchristian institution. It seemed now about to meet the crisis, for the solution of the great problem, and what stupendous consequences, as we have since learned, in tears, devastation, and blood, depended upon this crisis! The Revolution had inspired everywhere the sentiment of liberty. Large portions of the country were prepared for the emancipation of their slaves. The Methodist preachers, with very few exceptions, were emancipationists, and they had an almost irresistible moral power among the people. Many of them, besides Coke and Asbury, preached bravely against slavery. O'Kelly especially, the most influential itinerant in Virginia, opposed it energetically. Now was their sublime hour, and the critical hour of the nation in respect to this question. But they failed, and history must not evade the fact. They were persecuted and threatened, and sometimes mobbed; but many of their people, many slaveholders, sustained them. Emancipations were becoming frequent. The leading statesmen of the nation were with them in opinion. But Asbury and Coke both shrunk before the unavoidable difficulties of the question. It was natural that, in after years, they should believe it had been expedient to compromise with their opponents. The Church long believed so, but we have lived to see the consequences of their policy in a vast ecclesiastical schism, an unparalleled political rebellion, the loss of thousands of millions of treasures, of hundreds of thousands of lives, and the devastation of half

the continent. Few careful students of the civil and ecclesiastical history of these times can doubt that, had Methodism courageously fought out the contest which it had now begun, it would at last have triumphed, and have saved the history of the civilized world from the darkest record in its pages since the horrors of the French Revolution. Not many weeks after Coke had left Virginia he and Asbury conceded to the Conference in Baltimore the suspension of the rules on slavery, and they were never fully again in force, though a decided declaration of opinion against the evil was recorded.

On June 1st, Coke met Asbury and the preachers in Conference at Baltimore. As he was to leave for Europe the next day, they sat till midnight. He preached before them at noon, urging ministerial faithfulness; and also early the next morning, on "St. Paul's awful exhortation to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Acts xx." In a few hours he was sailing out of the harbor, with feelings sadder than he had for years experienced in taking leave of his ministerial brethren.

Asbury preached his first sermon, after his ordination, in the evening of the day on which the Christmas Conference adjourned, Jan. 3, 1785, at Baltimore, on Eph. iii, 8, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." He found no new ministerial virtue in his new dignity. "My mind was unsettled," he says, "and I was slow in my testimony." The next day he was in the saddle, riding forty miles through the snow to Fairfax, Va. He traveled an average of thirty miles a day on horseback, preaching, reading prayers, and baptizing almost daily, and occasionally ordaining an itinerant. The fatigues of the route broke down his horse, but he obtained another.

Jesse Lee and Henry Willis joined him, and accompanied him as far as Charleston, S. C. He found the people generally gratified by the Episcopal organization of the Church, and its provision of the sacraments. "Nothing could have better pleased our Church folks," he says, "than the late step we have taken in administering the ordinances. To the *catholic* Presbyterians it also gives satisfaction, but the Baptists are discontented." They were hospitably entertained in Charleston about two weeks, and preached every day. Before they departed their host was converted. Willis was left to maintain the Methodist standard in the city.

Leaving Charleston, Asbury returned through North Carolina and Virginia, proclaiming his message along the whole route, attending Conferences with Coke, accompanying him to Mount Vernon, and parting with him at the Baltimore Conference. On Sunday, 5th of June, 1785, two days after the adjournment, he laid, with solemn forms, the corner-stone of Cokesbury College, at Abingdon, Md. As early as 1780, John Dickins suggested to Asbury, as has already been recorded, the plan of a Methodist academic institution. At the first interview of Coke with Asbury, at Barrett's Chapel, Asbury submitted the proposition to the doctor, who zealously approved it, and procured from the Christmas Conference[4] a vote that it should be immediately attempted as a collegiate establishment. Nearly five thousand dollars were quickly raised for the purpose. Coke had now contracted for the building materials, but could not stay to witness the beginning of the work. The site, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore, is one of the most commanding in the state; magnificent views extend in

[4] Not the Conference of 1785, as Strickland states. Life of Asbury p. 162.

some directions twenty, in others fifty miles. The picturesque landscapes of the Susquehanna valley lay on either side of the river, and the magnificent Chesapeake Bay stretches away in the distance till lost in the ocean.[5] "Attired in his long silk gown," says his biographer, "and with his flowing bands, the pioneer bishop of America took his position on the walls of the college, and announced for his text the following: 'The sayings which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.' The Spirit of the Lord was with him as with Elijah at the school of the prophets at Bethel. As he dwelt upon the importance of a thorough religious education, and looked forward to the effects

[5] "Previous to the departure of Dr. Coke for England fifteen trustees had been appointed, five of whom were from among the traveling preachers. The remaining trustees were chosen, not only for their high standing in the Church, and for their known ability for exercising the trust, but also from places sufficiently near to the college to make it convenient for them to attend the examinations of the students, which occurred 'one full month' previous to the time of the annual commencement. The traveling preachers chosen to represent the college in the board of trustees were John Chalmers, Henry Willis, Nelson Reed, Richard Whatcoat, and Joseph Everett. Of the lay trustees, Judge White and James Anderson were taken from Delaware; Henry Ennalls and John Carnan, from the Eastern Shore of Maryland; William Wilkins, from Annapolis; Philip Rogers, Samuel Owings, Isaac Burneston, James M'Cannon, and Emanuel Kent, from Baltimore." Dr. Hamilton in Methodist Quarterly Review, 1859, p. 178.

which would result to the generations to come from the streams which should spring from this opening fountain of sanctified learning, his soul enlarged and swelled with rapturous emotion."[6]

John Dickins published a description of the building in 1789, and says: "The college is one hundred and eight feet in length from east to west, and forty feet in breadth from north to south, and stands on the summit and center of six acres of land, with an equal descent and proportion of ground on each side. The whole building is well painted on the outside, and the windows completely glazed. The house is divided into rooms as follows: at the west end are two rooms on the lower floor, each twenty-five feet by twenty; the second and third stories the same. At the east end are two rooms, each twenty-five feet by twenty; the second and third stories are the same. In the middle of the lower floor is the college hall, forty feet square, and over that, on the second floor, two school-rooms, and on the third floor two bed-chambers. At the end of the hall are square spaces for four sets of staircases, two at the north and two at the south end, with proper doors opening on the staircases. The carpenters' work on the first and second floor, with one staircase, is almost completed. The plastering and painting of four rooms at the west are nearly finished; the school-rooms are also chiefly done, and one room at the west end partly plastered." It had at this time thirty students within its unfinished walls. A preparatory school of fifteen students had been opened under its roof by Truman Marsh, a Quaker, an excellent teacher. Wesley sent out a middle-aged clergyman, Rev. Mr. Heath, as principal. In September, 1787, an examination of the preparatory school took place, Asbury

[6] Strickland's Asbury, p. 163.

presiding, surrounded by leading friends of the institution; and, in December, Heath was publicly inaugurated as president, and Marsh and Patrick M'Closkey as professors. The number of students was now twenty-five. Three days were devoted, with religious ceremonies, to the occasion, Asbury preaching on the first of them from Psalm xxxvii, 3: "Trust in the Lord and do good;" on the second (Sunday) from 2 Kings iv, 40: "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot;" and on the third from Isa. lxv, 23: "They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

Abingdon soon became a favorite resort for families desiring a beautiful locality, and the advantages of a good school. It accommodated the Conference in 1786; it became customary, indeed, for the Baltimore Conference to begin its session in the city, and adjourn to Cokesbury College for the conclusion of its deliberations. Joseph Everett, heretofore noticed as one of the notable preachers of the day, acted as chaplain to the institution for some years. Joseph Toy, who was converted under the preaching of Captain Webb, at Burlington, N. J., and was a good mathematical scholar, became a professor; "he was one of the purest men and soundest preachers known to Methodism." In 1789 an extraordinary religious interest prevailed among the pupils. In 1792 it reported more than seventy students. Its curriculum included, besides the English branches, the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, and French languages. In the Discipline for 1789 is given a detailed statement of the designs and order of the institution. "It is to receive for education and board the sons of the elders and preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers, and of other friends.

It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed gratis. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. The college will be under the presidentship of the bishops of our Church for the time being, and is to be supported by yearly collections throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath. Our first object shall be, to answer the design of Christian education, by forming the minds of the youth, through divine aid, to wisdom and holiness, by instilling into their tender minds the principles of true religion, speculative, experimental, and practical, and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational, scriptural Christians. And this is one principal reason why we do not admit students indiscriminately. For we are persuaded that the promiscuous admission of all sorts of youth into a seminary of learning is pregnant with many bad consequences. It is also our particular desire that all who shall be educated in our college may be kept at the utmost distance as from vice in general, so in particular from softness and effeminacy of manners. We shall therefore inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning; and we are convinced, by constant observation and experience, that this is of vast importance both to body and mind. The employments which we have chosen for the recreation of the students are such as are of the greatest public utility, agriculture and architecture—studies more especially necessary for a new-

settled country; and of consequence the instructing of our youth, in all the practical branches of these important arts, will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to their country. In teaching the languages, care shall be taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. And the utmost caution shall be used, that nothing immodest be found in any of our books. But this is not all. We shall take care that our books be not only inoffensive, but useful; that they contain as much strong sense and as much genuine morality as possible. As many of the students as possible shall be lodged and boarded in the town of Abingdon, among our pious friends; but those who cannot be so lodged and boarded, shall be provided for in the college. The price of education shall be four guineas. The sons of the traveling preachers shall be boarded, educated, and clothed gratis, except those whose parents, according to the judgment of the Conference, are of ability to defray the expense. The orphans shall be boarded, educated, and clothed gratis. No traveling preacher shall have the liberty of keeping his son on the foundation any longer than he travels, unless he be superannuated, or disabled by want of health."

The regimen of the institution was remarkable for its rigor, if not for its wisdom. Examples may be cited as curious, if not as affording valuable suggestions to educators. Students were required to rise at five o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, and to be in bed at nine o'clock, "without fail;" to study seven hours a day, with intervals of exercise or recreation, three hours being given to dinner and its following recreations. No studies were allowed after seven o'clock in the evening. The "recreations were gardening, walking, riding, and bath-

ing, without doors; and the carpenter's, joiner's, cabinet-maker's, or turner's business, within doors." A large plot of land, of at least three acres, was appropriated for a garden, and a person, skilled in gardening, appointed to overlook the students when employed in that recreation. A master, or some proper person by him appointed, was always present at the time of bathing. Only one was allowed to bathe at a time, and no one to remain in the water above a minute. "Each student must have a bed to himself, whether in or out of the college. He must lie on mattresses, not on feather beds. The bishops shall examine by themselves, or their delegates, into the progress of all the students in learning, every half year, or oftener, if possible. The elders, deacons, and preachers, as often as they visit Abingdon, shall examine the students concerning their knowledge of God and religion. The students shall be divided into proper classes for this purpose."

During its ten years' history, Cokesbury College acquired an extensive fame. It was a shelter to the children of the preachers, a favorite resort of the itinerants, and an honor to the Church. But Asbury suffered hardly less trouble, in supporting and managing it, than Wesley did in sustaining Kingswood Seminary. It was destroyed by fire, at midnight, December 7, 1795. Asbury was in Charleston, S. C., when he received the news; he wrote in his Journal: "We have now a second and confirmed account that Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of £10,000 in about ten years. If any man should give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house I would not do it. The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield nor the Methodists to build colleges. I wished only for schools—Dr. Coke wanted a college. I feel distressed at the loss of the library."

Returning from the ceremonies at Abingdon, Asbury reposed a short time at Perry Hall, and then resumed his episcopal itinerancy with his usual energy, preaching from Baltimore to New York, from New York to Charleston, and passing and repassing over the same route till he again met Coke in Charleston, in March, 1787, and found there a spacious house, or chapel, prepared for them.

On his arrival in Europe, Coke had been attacked by Charles Wesley[7] for his episcopal doings at Baltimore; he successfully vindicated himself by appealing to the authority of John Wesley for all his official acts, and by acknowledging that in one of his sermons, at Baltimore, he had used imprudently severe language toward the Anglican establishment. John Wesley replied to his brother: "I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has *done* nothing rashly that I know; but he has *spoken* rashly, which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it. . . . He is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those who can and will." Fully sustained by Wesley, Coke traversed the United Kingdom, preaching to great congregations, and awakening in them the consciousness of a new era in the history of Christianity. He seems to have received in America the anointing of that missionary spirit which originated, at last, through his agency, the whole Wesleyan missionary system. It was at the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in Baltimore, that he heard the appeal of Black for Nova Scotia. He responded to it with his whole heart; begging money for a mission to that province, ordaining preachers for it, and, especially, commis-

[7] In "Strictures on Dr. Coke's Ordination Sermon, preached at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, in December, 1784."

sioning Garrettson for it. During his present visit to Europe, this and similar missionary opportunities kept his soul kindled with interest, and were the themes of his appeals to the people in England, Scotland, and Ireland. His biographer says that "the grand but neglected provisions of the Gospel, which can save not a few, or many, but all who need them—and the guiltily-ignored obligations of duty incumbent on the drowsy and unfaithful Churches at home to send its message of mercy to all the tribes of our race—had risen before him with the light and awfulness of an apocalypse from God, and had given the final stamp to the character of his life."[8]

He published an "Address to the Pious and Benevolent" in behalf of missions, the first Wesleyan document of the kind.[9] He raised funds for Nova Scotia, and induced Wesley to send with him to that distant field three preachers, Hammet, Warrener, and Clark, as a reinforcement to Garrettson and his few fellow-laborers.

On the 24th of September, 1786, he embarked with them for the new world. And now extraordinary scenes awaited him on the high seas; apparent reverses and disasters, but real and marvelous interventions of providence, as seen in the history of their results. Starting on their destined route for Nova Scotia, they were a month in reaching the mid seas. There on the 24th of October they sprung a leak. Three days later "a tempest blew with fury greater than the captain had known for ten years. The mainmast betrayed signs of weakness, and the axes were in readiness to cut it away, if needful. The leak increased. Wafted to the very confines of

[8] Etheridge's Coke, p. 156.

[9] An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, proposing an Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries, etc., by Thomas Coke, LL.D. 1786.

eternity, the doctor had deep searchings of heart. Here is the result: 'What reason have I to desire to live? I have really forsaken all for Christ, and have neither motive nor desire to live but for his Church. Yet why should my desires be so strong on that account? With what perfect ease can the Lord fill up my province with one infinitely better qualified! I am therefore willing to die. I do love God, and have an indubitable assurance that whatever is wanting he will fully supply, before he takes me into the world of spirits.' In the following week the two mainstays of the mainmast gave way, and the tackling in general, by the strain of unbroken gales, was fast hastening to ruin. The poor doctor was regarded by the captain as a kind of evil genius, whose presence filled him with disquiet. His very prayers seemed to increase their danger; and the more he prayed, it was the captain's opinion the weather became worse. 'We have a Jonah on board, that's plain enough,' said he. These bad feelings rose with the storm, till one day, when the hurricane was at its height, and Coke was engaged in his cabin in earnest prayer, the poor man, in a frenzy of superstition, broke in, and, seizing some books and papers, threw them overboard. Then returning he laid hold of the doctor, as if for the purpose of completing the sacrifice by sending him after them. Some remains of common sense, however, prevented his going to such a length of wickedness, and he contented himself by administering sundry cuffs and shakes, which, though not very edifying to Coke, had the effect of giving some relief to the morbid feelings of the rough-handed sailor. On Thursday, the 30th, the gale became awful. 'At ten at night I heard the captain's wife crying out in the most dreadful fright; and presently one of the passengers came running, exclaiming, "Pray for us, doctor, for we

are just gone!" I came out and found that the ship in the hurricane was on her beam-ends. They were just going to cut away the mainmast. My brethren and self at this awful moment retired into a corner to pray, and I think I may say we all felt a perfect resignation to the will of God. Through grace I was entirely delivered from the fear of death But Brother Hammet was superior in faith to all of us. His first prayer, if it could be called by that name, was little short of a declaration of the full assurance he possessed that God would deliver us; and his second, a thanksgiving for our deliverance. It was not till after this, and we had sung a hymn together, that the foresail was shivered, and by that means the masts were saved, and probably the ship itself.' The captain, in describing the paroxysm of the tempest, said, 'It appeared at one time as if the clouds, the air, and the waves were all commingled.' They then drove before the stupendous gale with bare spars. On the night of Monday, December 4th, the storm seemed yet to gather new strength; and the ship, oozing at every joint, was as if in her last agony. A council was held. The captain expressed his despair of reaching Halifax; and the unanimous opinion was, that their only chance of safety, under God, was to go before the wind in the direction of the West Indies. As for three weeks they had gained only one hundred and twenty miles, provisions began to fail, and a short allowance was agreed upon. 'But,' says the doctor, 'the greatest trial of all to me is the hardly having any candles remaining; but to the glory of God I can say, that to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I have a strong persuasion we shall be driven to the West Indies.' Eleven days afterward they found their expectations verified. The weather gradually abated; the clouds broke away in dissolving forms of beauty; a

splendid tropic bird floated in the air before the ship, as if to welcome them to its own region; and the shattered bark, on the gentle ripples of the Caribbean seas, bore them to a grateful though unexpected haven in Antigua, on the Feast of the Nativity—a day of good omen to those islands of the West, for whose sable myriads, fast bound in the shadows of death, it brought the messengers of their redemption for time and eternity. No man on that morning could form a presage of the great results which were to accrue from this unlooked for visit; but could we who live in later days, and witness its developing consequences, have heard the notes of the first hymn of the congregation who gathered round the missionaries, we should have discerned the echo of the birth-song of the great Deliverer, when 'suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.'"

The language of his eloquent biographer is not too emphatic, nor too glowing; the history of the modern Church hardly presents a record of results more interesting, more beneficent, than those which attended this apparent defeat of Coke's voyage, and his consequent arrival in the West Indies.

Twenty-eight years before the arrival of Coke at Antigua, John Wesley, as he careered through the United Kingdom, paused to preach at Wandsworth. Nathaniel Gilbert, a West India planter, and Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua, was there, seeking health. He and two of his female slaves heard the Methodist apostle and were converted. Wesley baptized the two slaves, remarking that they were the first regenerated Africans he had ever seen, and adding, "Shall not his saving health be known to all nations?" a prophecy

which his act of that day was to tend mightily to fulfill. Gilbert returned with his converted slaves to Antigua. He became a correspondent of Wesley; he opened his mansion for weekly religious services, which he conducted himself as class-leader and local preacher, and founded a Society of nearly two hundred members. After years of successful but solitary labors he died, leaving the infant Church without a pastor. Two pious negro women kept it from dissolution by holding prayer-meetings every evening. In 1778 John Baxter, a London mechanic and local preacher, arrived there; he found out the lingering Society, and immediately took charge of it, becoming, practically, a missionary to the island; and in 1783 he succeeded, by the contributions of slaves, in erecting a chapel, the first Methodist Church of the West Indies. It was eight years after his arrival, that Coke was driven by the winds of heaven to his relief. Coke saw at once the divine providence which had cast him in this island world. He scattered his missionaries immediately among its isolated communities, withdrew Baxter from his mechanical business and commissioned him as a missionary, passed himself from island to island, preaching and breaking up the ground for the good seed; and thus was founded that powerful West India Methodism which, in our day, reports in Antigua alone between two and three thousand Church members, and, aggregately, throughout the islands, five districts, forty-eight circuits, nearly a hundred missionaries, besides many local preachers and exhorters, and nearly fifty thousand communicants; and which contributed more than any other agency to the sublime scene that, in the year 1834, solemnized to tears the Christian world; for at midnight of the last day of July, in that year, the Christian missions of the British West Indies culminated in "Emancipation

Eve." It was "a night much to be remembered." All the chapels were crowded, all the assemblies were upon their knees a few minutes before the sublime midnight hour struck, and when it struck, eight hundred thousand slaves rose up freemen, while a rapturous doxology rolled to the rejoicing stars from all the British Antilles. "Such strains," says a Methodist missionary, "for such an event, had never before been heard since the foundations of the world were laid."[10]

Having organized the mission work of the islands, Coke departed on the 10th of February, 1787, for Charleston, S. C., where he again met Asbury, dedicated the new Methodist chapel, which accommodated fifteen hundred hearers, and presided, with his colleague, in the first Conference of South Carolina. We have but few traces of the occasion. Coke says: "The preachers who labor in this state and Georgia met us here, according to the direction of Mr. Asbury; and in our Conference which we held together, the spirit of concord and love did eminently preside. All was peace and harmony. And at the public ordination of two deacons the Lord was pleased to pour out his Spirit largely upon us. As there are no more than forty whites here in Society, the building of a church worth a thousand pounds sterling has filled the people in general with amazement. Great has been the work of God both in this state and that of Georgia for the little time that we have labored in them. My soul is exulting in the prosperity of Zion."[11] Asbury provided him with a vigorous horse, and they both set out together to travel and preach through nearly the length of the continent. They passed over three hundred miles in one week, preaching every day. Asbury

[10] See Hist. of the Relig. Movement, etc., iii, p. 323.

[11] Coke's Journals, p 67.

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says they had to "swim upon their horses several times." The roads were generally bad, the forests dense, the swamps frequent and frightful. "The preachers," writes Coke, "ride here about a hundred miles a week; but the swamps and morasses they have to pass through it is tremendous to relate. Though it is now the month of April, I was above my knees in water on horseback in passing through a deep morass, and that when it was almost dark. . . . In traveling our rides are so long that we are frequently on horseback till midnight."

But he delights in his adventurous ministry. "I have got," he continues, "into my old romantic way of life, preaching in the midst of great forests, with scores and sometimes hundreds of horses tied to the trees, a sight which adds much interest to the scene." He was surprised at the triumphant progress of Methodism in these Southern regions. "Much of the glory and of the hand of God," he writes, "have I seen in riding through the circuit called Pedee, in South Carolina. When I was in America before there were but twenty in Society in this circuit; and it was much doubted at the Conference whether it would be for the glory of God to send even one preacher to this part of the country. But now, chiefly by the means of two young men, Hope Hull and Jeremiah Maston, the Societies consist of eight hundred and twenty-three members; and no less than two and twenty preaching-houses have been erected in this single circuit in the course of the last year."

They reached Halifax County, Va., where Coke, in his former tour, was presented by the grand jury as a seditious person on account of his antislavery exhortations. They now received him "with perfect peace and quietness." A rampant slaveholder, who had pursued him with a gun in order to shoot him, had been converted to

God, and become a member of the Society. In Mecklenburgh County he preached to the largest congregation he had ever seen in America, about four thousand people, though "there was no town within a great many miles." A Conference was held there in the primeval forest, and on such occasions, as well as at the minor Quarterly Conferences, the preachers and people came scores of miles. These were the high religious festivals of the nation in those early times. At this Conference good news reached them from beyond the mountains. Haw, "one of our elders," says Coke, "who last year was sent with a preacher to Kentucky, on the banks of the Ohio near the Mississippi, wrote to us a most enlivening account of the prospect in his district, and earnestly implored some further assistance. 'But observe,' added he, 'no one must be appoined for this country that is afraid to die! For there is now war with the Indians, who frequently lurk behind the trees, shoot the travelers, and then scalp them; and we have one Society on the very frontiers of the Indian country.' After this letter was read, a blessed young man (Brother Williamson) offered himself as a volunteer for this dangerous work. What can we not do or suffer when the love of Christ constrains!"

They held a Conference at Baltimore on the 1st of May. It had been appointed the preceding year for Abingdon, on the 24th of July, but was anticipated to accommodate Coke. He met with some severe opposition at this session, and alludes to it as follows: "Conference began, when, behold, Satan exerted his utmost subtilty. Never surely was more external peace and liberty enjoyed by the Church of God, or any part of it, since the fall of man, than we enjoy in America, and everything seems to be falling before the power of the

word. What then remained for the infernal serpent but to sow the seeds of schism and division among ourselves. But glory be to God! yea, glory forever be ascribed to his sacred name, the devil was completely defeated. Our painful contests, I trust, have produced the most indissoluble union between my brethren and me. We thoroughly perceived the mutual purity of each other's intentions in respect to the points in dispute. We mutually yielded and mutually submitted, and the silken cords of love and affection were tied to the horns of the altar forever and ever. The Lord has done marvelous things in this land in the course of the last year. No less than six thousand six hundred have been added to the Society on the balance in the United States alone. And praised be the Lord, the work is deep as well as wide. O that I myself may be watered under this glorious shower, and lose nothing of my share in the blessings which the heavens are pouring down! At this Conference another young man offered himself as a volunteer for Kentucky, and the two preachers are to be sent off as soon as possible, breathing the true spirit of missionaries. I felt much of the power of God in all my public administrations at Baltimore, and I have no doubt but many of my hearers felt it too. The divine Comforter was also very graciously present at the ordination of two elders and eleven deacons."

His troubles arose from an alleged abuse of his power by his changing, while yet in Europe, the time and place of this session, a fact which will hereafter come under our attention.

After the session Asbury and Coke pressed forward to New York. Coke returned to Philadelphia, whence he embarked again for Europe on the 25th of June, 1787.

Asbury, again alone in his vast Episcopal labors, paused not for rest. He hastened over much of Long Island, thence up the Hudson, crossing the romantic mountains of West Point to Newburgh. In four weeks more he had gone over the middle states as far as Bath, Va. He sometimes addressed a thousand people in the woods. He was often sick, dragging his infirm body along by an energetic will. "Faint," he says, "yet persevering." His soul glowed meanwhile with the spiritual exhilaration of his labors. An hour of retirement, especially in the forest, was always gratefully and devoutly refreshing to him. "I am happy," he writes, "in being alone. I poured out my soul to God for the whole work, and the dear people and preachers of my charge. My body is weak, my soul enjoys peace. I have power over all sin, and possess a spirit of prayer and watchfulness: I feel myself dead to all below, and desire to live only for God and souls." "O what a weariness would life be without God and love and labor!" His great Spartan soul was not incapable of sentiment. "O how sweet are labor, and Christian society, and the solitary woods to me!" He hastened to the further South, and wrote, as he journeyed, "I seldom mount my horse for a ride of less distance than twenty miles on ordinary occasions, and frequently have forty or fifty, in moving from one circuit to the other. In traveling thus I suffer much from hunger and cold." He reached Charleston again, held there a Conference, and was mobbed in the church. The crowd was great outside and within the building. "A man made a riot at the door, and an alarm at once took place. The ladies leaped out at the windows, and a dreadful confusion ensued. Again, while I was speaking at night, a stone was thrown against the north side of the church, then

another on the south; a third came through the pulpit window and struck near me inside the pulpit. I, however, continued to speak on. Upon the whole, I have had more liberty to preach in Charleston this visit than I ever had before, and am of opinion that God will work here; but our friends are afraid of the cross." He went into Georgia, and held the first Conference in that state. The only notice I can discover of it is in his Journals: Wednesday, April 9, "Our Conference began at the Forks of Broad River, where six members and four probationers attended. Brother Major was sick, and could not meet us. Soon after he made his exit to his eternal rest. I felt free, and preached with light and liberty each day. Many that had no religion in Virginia have found it after their removal into Georgia and South Carolina. Here at least the seed sprung up, wherever else it may have been sown. Our little Conference was about sixty-one pounds deficient in their quarterage, nearly one third of which was made up to them."

From Georgia Asbury directs his course to the northwestward through the wilderness and ascends the Alleghanies. On April 28, 1788, he says: "After getting our horses shod we made a move for Holstein, and entered upon the mountains; the first of which I called steel, the second stone, and the third iron mountain: they are rough, and difficult to climb. We were spoken to on our way by most awful thunder and lightning, accompanied by heavy rain. We crept for shelter into a little dirty house, where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade. We felt the want of fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet. At the head of Watauga we fed, and reached Ward's that night. Coming to the river next day we hired a young man to swim over for the canoe, in which

we crossed, while our horses swam to the other shore. The waters being up we were compelled to travel an old road over the mountains. Night came on: I was ready to faint with a violent headache. The mountain was steep on both sides. I prayed to the Lord for help Presently a profuse sweat broke out upon me, and my fever entirely subsided. About nine o'clock we came to Grear's. After taking a little rest here, we set out next morning for Brother Coxe's on Holstein River. I had trouble enough. Our route lay through the woods, and my pack-horse would neither follow, lead, nor drive, so fond was he of stopping to feed on the green herbage. I tried the lead, and he pulled back. I tied his head up to prevent his grazing, and he ran back. The weather was excessively warm. I was much fatigued, and my temper not a little tried. I fed at I. Smith's, and prayed with the family. Arriving at the river I was at a loss what to do, but providentially a man came along who conducted me across. This has been an awful journey to me, and this a tiresome day; and now, after riding seventy-five miles, I have thirty-five miles more to General Russell's. I rest one day to revive man and beast."

He had thus scaled the grand barrier of the West; and the great Mississippi Valley, destined to become the chief theater of his Church and of the nation, lay below him in boundless range and primeval wildness. He meets and encourages Tunnel, and, hastening into Tennessee, holds its first Conference at Half-Acres and Keyswoods, in May.[12] "We held," he says, "our Conference three days, and I preached each day. The weather was cold, the room without fire, and otherwise uncomfortable.

[12] Asbury records the locality of the session as in Tennessee. I have somewhere seen it placed within the western limit of Virginia, but in either case it was beyond the mountains.

We nevertheless made out to keep our seats until we had finished the essential parts of our business." This is all the record he has left respecting the first ultramontane Methodist Conference. There were "brethren from Kentucky" present, for on his route he had met them and preached before them. He proclaimed the Gospel continually among the scattered settlements, and, returning into North Carolina, passed into Virginia, still among the mountains, and at last reached Pennsylvania. On the 10th of July he writes, as an example of his Episcopal fare, "We had to cross the Alleghany Mountain again at a bad passage. Our course lay over mountains and through valleys, and the mud and mire was such as might scarcely be expected in December. We came to an old, forsaken habitation in Tyger's Valley. Here our horses grazed about, while we boiled our meat. Midnight brought us up at Jones's, after riding forty or perhaps fifty miles. The old man, our host, was kind enough to wake us up at four o'clock in the morning. We journeyed on through devious, lonely wilds, where no food might be found, except what grew in the woods, or was carried with us. We met with two women who were going to see their friends, and to attend the Quarterly Meeting at Clarksburg. Near midnight we stopped at A's., who hissed his dogs at us; but the women were determined to get to Quarterly Meeting, so we went in. Our supper was tea. Brothers Phœbus and Cook took to the woods; old —— gave up his bed to the women. I lay along the floor on a few deer-skins with the fleas. That night our poor horses got no corn, and next morning they had to swim across the Monongahela. After a twenty miles' ride we came to Clarksburg, and man and beast were so outdone that it took us ten hours to accomplish it. I lodged with

Colonel Jackson. There attended about seven hundred people, to whom I preached with freedom; and I believe the Lord's power reached the hearts of some. After administering the sacrament I was well satisfied to take my leave. We rode thirty miles to Father Haymond's after three o'clock, Sunday afternoon, and made it nearly eleven before we came in. About midnight we went to rest, and rose at five o'clock next morning. My mind has been severely tried under the great fatigue endured both by myself and my horse. O how glad should I be of a plain, clean plank to lie on, as preferable to most of the beds; and where the beds are in a bad state, the floors are worse. The gnats are almost as troublesome here as the mosquitoes in the lowlands of the seaboard. This country will require much work to make it tolerable. The people are, many of them, of the boldest cast of adventurers, and with some the decencies of civilized society are scarcely regarded. On the one hand, savage warfare teaches them to be cruel; and on the other, the preaching of Antinomians poisons them with error in doctrine. Good moralists they are not, and good Christians they cannot be, unless they are better taught."

He reached Uniontown, Pa., where, with Whatcoat and eleven other preachers, he held a Conference on the 22d of July, and consecrated what is supposed to have been the first Methodist ordination beyond the Alleghanies. He devotes but few lines to the occasion. "We felt great peace while together, and our counsels were marked by love and prudence. We had seven members of conference and five probationers. I preached on 1 Peter v, 7; and Brother Whatcoat gave us an excellent discourse on 'O man of God, flee these things!' Friday, 25. We concluded our Conference." Asbury was now making his-

tory, and had no time to write it. A pioneer preacher, then a youth, witnessed the session, and thus alludes to it: "Mr. Asbury officiated, not in the costume of the lawn-robed prelate, but as the plain presbyter in gown and band, assisted by Richard Whatcoat, elder, in the same clerical habit. The person ordained was Michael Leard, of whom it was said that he could repeat nearly the whole of the New Testament from memory, and also large portions of the Old. The scenes of that day looked well in the eyes of the Church people, for not only did the preachers appear in sacerdotal robes, but the morning service was read as abridged by Mr. Wesley. The priestly robes and prayer-book were, however, soon laid aside at the same time, for I have never seen the one nor heard the other since."[13]

Asbury continued to traverse the states from New York to Georgia, from the Atlantic to the Alleghanies, having the whole Episcopal care of the Societies till March, 1789, when Coke rejoined him in South Carolina. He held important Conferences in these years, but gives us little or no information, of historical interest, about them. Of the first New York session he records but a sentence: "Tuesday, 30th of September, 1788, our Conference began, and continued until Saturday, the 4th of October." We can glean from the rescued records of John-street Church only a few unimportant particulars respecting it. That Society was at some expense to prepare for the occasion. "Green baize" and "red marine" draperies were obtained for the chapel. About fifty dollars were expended for it. "The Church was cleaned for the occasion. There were sundry expenses at the time of the Conference, and they footed the bills, besides

[13] Rev. James Quinn's Life, by Rev. J. F. Wright, p. 51. Cincinnati. 1851.

taking good care of the bishop's horses and throwing in a bridle."[14]

Coke had spent the interval of his absence in unintermitted labors in England and in the West Indies, and arrived at Charleston, from Jamaica, on the 24th of February. Asbury, after waiting there for him, had to leave, alone, for Georgia. Coke immediately set out in pursuit of him, and "riding," he says, "in two days as much as I had in three, overtook him. The elder stationed in Charleston accompanied me. The first day we rode forty-seven miles, for about two miles of which our horses were up to their bellies in water, with two great invisible ditches on our right hand and left. One of the grandest objects to be seen in this country is the fires in the woods in the spring. The people set fire to the grass and little shrubs, to burn up the dry leaves which cover the ground, that the grass which grows up afterward may be accessible to the cattle. Late one evening I saw a most astonishing illumination while traveling through the woods. I seemed surrounded with fires. Sometimes the flame catches the oozing turpentine of the

[14] Wakeley, p. 319. "This Conference," adds Wakeley, "is not noticed in the printed Minutes, nor in Bangs's History of Methodism. He notices seven Conferences held in 1788, but not this. Had it not been for the 'old book,' we should have been ignorant of it. I am glad it is confirmed by Asbury's Journal. It was the first Conference held north of Philadelphia; the first held in the city of New York. It was an era in our history as a Church. Since the above was written I have a further confirmation of it; testimony that cannot be doubted. The Rev. Thomas Morrell, in his unpublished journal, that now lies before me, says, 'At the Conference in New York, in October, 1788, I was ordained a deacon, and appointed to the Trenton Circuit. At the June Conference, 1789, I was ordained an elder.' I have seen his parchments, which show he was not mistaken in regard to dates as far as these Conferences are concerned. It is a most singular thing that the session of the first Conference in New York should have been omitted, not only in the General Minutes, but also by our ecclesiastical historians."

pine-trees, and blazes to the very top. I have seen old rotten pine-trees with their trunks and branches full of fire. We had congregations all the way after I met Mr. Asbury, but our journeys in the back parts of Carolina and Georgia were very trying. Sometimes we lost our way; in one instance, twenty-one miles. In general, nothing but bacon and eggs, with Indian corn, to eat. Mr. Asbury had brought with him some tea and sugar. In several places we had to lie on the floor, which indeed I regarded not, though my bones were a little sore in the mornings. The great revival, the great rapidity of the work, the peculiar consolations of God's Spirit, and the retirement I met with in these vast forests, far overbal anced every trial. Many other circumstances also amply compensated for the disagreeable parts of my journey. Sometimes a most noble vista of a mile in length would open between the lofty pines. Sometimes the tender fawns and hinds would suddenly appear, and on seeing or hearing us, would glance through the woods and vanish away. Frequently, indeed, we were obliged to lodge in houses built with round logs, and open to every blast. Often we rode sixteen or eighteen miles without seeing a house or a human creature, and often were obliged to ford deep and dangerous rivers and creeks. Many times we ate nothing from seven in the morning till six in the evening, though sometimes we took our repast on stumps of trees near some spring of water."[15]

Asbury says the Georgia Conference began "at Grant's," Sunday, 8th of March. "Here we have a house for public worship, and one also at Merreweath-

[15] Asbury in his Journal writes, while on this journey, "Riding late has much disordered me, having taken cold, with fever and pains in the head." In another place, "We rode forty miles, hungry and weary."

er's. On Thursday we appointed a committee to procure five hundred acres of land for the establishment of a school in the State of Georgia. Conference being ended, we directed our hasty steps back to Charleston, calling at the several places we attended on our journey hither." Coke gives us fuller information of the session "On the 9th of March we began our Conference in Georgia. Here we agreed (as we have ever since in each of the Conferences) that Mr. Wesley's name should be inserted at the head of our small Annual Minutes, and also in the form of Discipline: in the Small Minutes as the fountain of our Episcopal office, and in the form of Discipline as the father of the whole work under the divine guidance. To this all the Conferences have cheerfully and unanimously agreed. We have two thousand and eleven in Society in the State of Georgia. The increase in the last year has been seven hundred and eighty-four. At this Conference we agreed to build a college in Georgia, and our principal friends in this state have engaged to purchase at least two thousand acres of good land for its support. For this purpose there was twelve thousand five hundred pounds' weight of tobacco subscribed in one congregation, which will produce, clear of all expenses, about one hundred pounds sterling. We have engaged to erect it, God willing, within five years, and do most humbly entreat Mr. Wesley to permit us to name it Wesley College, as a memorial of his affection for poor Georgia, and of our great respect for him." On the 17th "we opened," says Coke, "our Conference in Charleston for the State of South Carolina. My congregations were very large in this city, as well as Mr. Asbury's, and great liberty the Lord was pleased to give me. We were bitterly attacked in the public papers, but our mild answer, I believe, did us more serv-

ice than the illiberal attempts of our persecutors did us hurt. In this state we have three thousand three hundred and seventy-seven in Society: the increase is nine hundred and seven."

The two bishops again traveled northward together, preaching continually, holding Conferences, and organizing circuits. On the 20th of April they began the "Conference for the State of North Carolina at the house of a planter in the country (M'Knight) on the borders of a fine river called the Yadkin. Nineteen preachers met us there, some of whom came from the other side of the great Alleghany Mountains. The numbers in this state are six thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, the increase seven hundred and forty-one. We here received most reviving letters concerning the progress of the work in Kentucky, the new western world, as we call it. In these letters our friends in that country earnestly entreat to have a college built for the education of their youth, offering to give or purchase three or four thousand acres of good land for its support. We debated the point, and sent them word that if they will provide five thousand acres of fertile ground, and settle it on such trustees as we shall mention under the direction of the Conference, we will undertake to complete a college for that part of our connection within ten years." "In Halifax County, Va.," Coke continues, "where I met with much persecution four years ago, almost all the great people of the county came in their chariots and other carriages to hear me, and behaved with great propriety. There were not less than five colonels in the congregation. On the 18th we opened our first Conference for the State of Virginia in the town of Petersburg, and both in the public and private meetings the Lord was very present with us. Thirteen preachers were received

on trial, all well recommended. In the former Conferences there was not a sufficient number of new preachers to answer all our calls, but in this Conference every deficiency was supplied."

Coke was startled at Annapolis by an example of "revival" excitement, but found no great difficulty in excusing it. "After my last prayer," he says, "the congregation began to pray and praise aloud in a most astonishing manner. At first I felt some reluctance to enter into the business, but soon the tears began to flow, and I have seldom found a more comforting or strengthening time. What shall we say? Souls are awakened and converted by multitudes, and the work is surely genuine, if there be a genuine work of God upon the earth. Whether there be wildfire in it or not, I do most ardently wish that there was such a work at this time in England."

At the Baltimore Conference, begun on the 4th of May, still more demonstrative scenes occurred. After an evening sermon by Coke, the crowded assembly spent the night till two o'clock in prayer and praise. "Out of a congregation of two thousand people, I suppose," he says, "two or three hundred were engaged in praising God, praying for the conviction and conversion of sinners, or exhorting those around them; and hundreds more were engaged in wrestling prayer either for their own conversion or sanctification. One of our elders was the means that night of the conversion of seven poor penitents within his little circle in less than fifteen minutes. Such was the zeal of many, that a tolerable company attended the preaching at five the next morning, notwithstanding the late hour at which they parted. Next evening Mr. Asbury preached, and again the congregation began as before. This praying and praising aloud has been common in Baltimore for a considerable

time, notwithstanding our congregation in this town was for many years before one of the calmest and most critical upon the Continent. Many also of our elders, who were the most sedate of our preachers, have entered with all their hearts into this work. And it must be allowed, that gracious and wonderful has been the change, our greatest enemies themselves being the judges, that has been wrought on multitudes, on whom this work begun at those wonderful seasons." He notices with interest "a custom peculiar to the American preachers. If there be more preachers than one in a congregation, the preachers that have not preached give each of them a warm exhortation. And as far as I can judge, by external effects wrought on the congregations, and by consequent inquiry and information, more good has been done in most instances by the exhortations than by the sermon; more souls have been awakened and converted to God."

On the 23d, the first Conference in New Jersey was held at Trenton. The bishops give us but glimpses of the session. Asbury says, "We opened it in great peace. We labored for a manifestation of the Lord's power, and it was not altogether in vain. Sunday, 24th. We had abundance of preaching." Coke says: "All the preachers seemed full of love. The few friends we have in this town did everything, I believe, that they could conceive, to make us comfortable; but, alas! the work is, and ever has been, at a very low ebb in this place. The numbers in Jersey are 1,751; here has been a decrease of 295. This will necessarily happen sometimes in so extensive a work; yea, where the ministers have been most faithful. Rotten members, be they ever so numerous, must be lopped off, or we should soon become like other men." Conferences are now as numerous almost as the earlier Quarterly Conferences were, and are always festival

occasions. In four days the two bishops were sitting in another in New York. We are dependent upon their brief notices for most, if not all, that we know of it. Asbury writes: "Thursday, 28. Our Conference began. All things were conducted in peace and order Our work opens in New York State. New England stretcheth out the hand to our ministry, and I trust thousands will shortly feel its influence. My soul shall praise the Lord. In the midst of haste I find peace within. Sunday, 31. We had a gracious season to preachers and people, while I opened and applied Isaiah xxv, 6–8: 'And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow; of wines on the lees well refined.'" Coke says of the New York session: "A Conference, like the others, all peace and concord—Glory! glory be to God! In this city we have a great revival, and a great increase; in consequence of which we are going to build a second church. In the country parts of this state, Freeborn Garrettson, one of our presiding elders, has been greatly blessed, and is endued with an uncommon talent for opening new places. With a set of inexperienced but zealous youths, he has not only carried our work in this state as high as Lake Champlain, but has raised congregations in most of the states of New England, and also in the little state of Vermont, within about a hundred miles of Montreal. The numbers in the state of New York are 2,004; the increase, 900. The whole number in the United States is 43,265; the whole increase, 6,111; which is very great, considering that not more than eight months, or thereabouts, have elapsed since the last Conference. Of the above-mentioned number, 35,021 are whites, 8,241 are blacks, and 3 are Indians. We have now settled our printing business, I

trust, on an advantageous footing, both for the people individually and the connection at large, as it is fixed on a secure basis, and on a very enlarged scale. The people will thereby be amply supplied with books of pure divinity for their reading, which is of the next importance to preaching; and the profits of the books are to be applied partly to finish and pay off the debt of our college, and partly to establish missions and schools among the Indians. And, through the blessing of God, we are now determined to use our efforts to introduce the Gospel among the Indians." Significant intimations! as we shall hereafter see. The Methodist Book Concern had now been founded, Methodism had effectually broken into New England and was spreading to its remotest parts, and the scheme of its Domestic Missions had dawned.

In a few days Coke was again on deck for Europe, his spirit kindled by what he had witnessed in the New World. Asbury, after taking leave of him, writes, "My soul retires into solitude and God!" But not long; that very night he was preaching in New York "alarmingly," and "the power of God and a baptizing flame came upon the people." He passed up the Hudson, and then through New Jersey, over Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh, and thence to Uniontown. He is hopeful of all this trans-Alleghany region. "Now I believe," he says, "God is about to work in this place; our circuits are better supplied than formerly; many of the people are alive to God; and there are openings in many places. I wrote a letter to Cornplanter, chief of the Seneca nation of Indians. I hope God will shortly visit these outcasts of men, and send messengers to publish the glad tidings of salvation among them. I have constant consolation, and do not feel like my former self." He re-entered Maryland, and

reached Baltimore to preach, on Tuesday, 8th of September, amid extraordinary interest. "The last Quarterly Meeting," he writes, "was a wonder-working time: fifty or sixty souls, then and there, appeared to be brought to God; people were daily praying from house to house; some crying for mercy, others rejoicing in God, and not a few, day after day, joining in society for the benefit of religious fellowship. Praise the Lord, O my soul! I spent some time in visiting from house to house, and begging for the college. Many of the children of the Methodists are the happy subjects of this glorious revival. We have more members in Baltimore (town and point) than in any city or town on the continent besides."

Whatcoat had accompanied him to Pittsburgh, and in December rejoins him to accompany him southward. They pass rapidly, but continually preaching, through Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, to Charleston, where they hold another Conference, February 15, 1790. "The Lord was present in power," writes Whatcoat; "the saints were glad, and the wicked offended." Asbury says: "Here I received good news from Baltimore and New York; about two hundred souls have been brought to God within a few weeks. We feel a little quickening here. Brother Whatcoat preaches every night. Saturday, 13. The preachers are coming in to the Conference. I have felt fresh springs of desire in my soul for a revival of religion. O may the work be general! It is a happy thing to be united as is our Society. The happy news of the revival of the work of God flies from one part of the continent to the other, and all partake of the joy. Sunday, 14. I preached twice. Next day (Monday) our Conference began. Our business was conducted in great peace and love. We had some quickening seasons and living meetings. Several

young people came under awakenings. Wednesday, 17. I preached on, 'If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.' It was a searching season. The evening before an extract of sundry letters, from New York and Baltimore, was read in the congregation, at which saints and sinners were affected. But we have not a sufficient breastwork. Our friends are too mute and fearful, and many of the *outdoors* people are violent and wicked. I have had a busy, trying time for about nine days past, and I have hopes that some hundreds in this city will be converted by this time next year. Our Conference resolved on establishing Sunday-schools for poor children, white and black."

They go into Georgia, sounding the alarm through its scattered settlements, and hold, Wednesday, 10th of March, another Conference "at Grant's." Asbury gives it two brief paragraphs, its only remaining history: "We had preaching every day, and there were some quickenings among the people. Our business was conducted in peace and unanimity. The deficiencies of the preachers, who receive a salary of sixty-four dollars per annum from this Conference, amounted to seventy-four pounds for the last year. Thursday, 11. We had a rainy day, yet a full house, and a living love-feast. Some souls were converted, and others professed sanctification. I had some opening in speaking from Ezek. ii, 7. We have a prospect of obtaining a hundred acres of land for every one hundred pounds we can raise and pay, for the support of Wesley and Whitefield school. On Monday we rode out to view three hundred acres of land offered for the above purpose. My soul has been much tried since Conference began. I must strive to keep from rising too high, or sinking too low." They now direct their course through the wilderness northwestward, and are

soon among the mountains; but we shall have occasion hereafter to notice their adventures there.

On the 14th of June Asbury held a Conference at Petersburgh, Va. "We had," he says, "some little quickenings, but no great move among the people at our public preaching. Mr. Jarratt preached for us; friends at first are friends again at last. There were four elders and seventeen deacons ordained; ten young men who offered to travel, besides those who remained on trial. We have good news from a far country—Jersey flames with religion; some hundreds are converted. The work of God revives here, although not in the same degree as it did two years ago. In the midst of all my labor and trouble I enjoy peace within." He extended his travels in all directions, until the 23d of February, 1791, when he again met Coke at Charleston, S. C. The doctor, after traversing the United Kingdom and the West India Islands, had sailed from Jamaica for the United States with Hammett, one of his missionaries. They were wrecked on Edisto Island; the Conference at Charleston had finished its business, but remained in the city one day longer, hoping for his arrival. He had the pleasure of spending that day with them "in many solemn and useful conversations." The two bishops departed, on separate routes, to the Georgia Conference, which was opened by Coke with a sermon on the 13th of March. They journeyed onward toward the North, "preaching the word," "instant in season and out of season." They visited and preached among the Catawba Indians. Coke records his usual American adventures, bewildered wanderings in the pathless forests, out of which the way is found "by the preachers' mark—*the split bush*,"[16]

[16] Coke says: "This circumstance may appear to many immaterial; nowever, as it may convey some idea of the mode in which the preach-

the fording of dangerous streams, lodgings in cabins, great congregations in groves. He meets a preacher, Samuel Cowles, who cheers him with an unexpected account of himself. "Six years ago," says the doctor, "he lived with his mother near Williamsburgh, in Virginia. None of the family were converted, or acquainted with the Methodists at that time. In the course of my tour through the states, in the year 1785, I called at their house for some reasons which I have forgot. Before I parted with them I made them a present of the extract of Mr. Law's Treatise on the Nature and Design of Christianity, which is printed among us. By the means of this little tract they were so stirred up to seek the Lord, that now the mother, the preacher, six children who are married, and their husbands and wives, fourteen in all, are converted, and have joined our Society. Indeed, the young preacher is a flame of fire. How blessed an employment it is to be sowing the divine seed everywhere, to be instant in season and out of season! O how willing the Lord is to be gracious!"

The bishops reached the Yadkin River, where, on the 2d of April, they held the North Carolina Conference. "There were," writes Coke, "in all about thirty preachers, several of whom came from the other side of the Appalachian Mountains. At this Conference a remarkable spirit of prayer was poured forth on the preachers. Every night, before we concluded, heaven itself seemed to be opened to our believing souls. One of the preach-

ers are obliged to travel in this country, I will just enlarge upon it. When a new circuit is formed in these immense forests, the preacher, whenever he comes in the first instance to a junction of several roads or paths, splits two or three of the bushes that lie on the side of the right path, that the preachers who follow him may find out their way with ease. In one of the circuits the wicked discovered the secret, and split bushes in wrong places on purpose to deceive the preachers."

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ers was so blessed in the course of our prayers that he was constrained to cry, 'O, I never was so happy in all my life before! O what a heaven of heavens I feel!' At each of our Conferences, before we parted, every preacher gave an account of his experience from the first strivings of the Spirit of God, as far he could remember; and also of his call to preach and the success the Lord had given to his labors. It was quite new, but was made a blessing, I am persuaded, to us all."

They continued their route together till they arrived at Port Royal, Va., where, on the 29th of April, they heard of the death of Wesley. Coke was stunned by the news. For nearly a day he was not "able to weep; but afterward some refreshing tears gave him almost inexpressible ease." He hastened away, seeking an immediate passage to England, but found none till the 16th of May, when he embarked at New Castle, Del. Asbury thus alludes, briefly but significantly, to the mournful event. "The solemn news," he says, "reached our ears that the public papers had announced the death of that dear man of God, John Wesley. He died in his own house in London, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, after preaching the Gospel sixty-four years. When we consider his plain and nervous writings; his uncommon talent for sermonizing and journalizing; that he had such a steady flow of animal spirits; so much of the spirit of government in him; his knowledge as an observer; his attainments as a scholar; his experience as a Christian; I conclude, his equal is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his superior among all the sons of Adam he may have left behind. Brother Coke was sunk in spirit, and wished to hasten home immediately. For myself, notwithstanding my long absence from Mr. Wesley, and a few unpleasant

expressions in some of the letters the dear old man has written to me, (occasioned by the misrepresentation of others,) I feel the stroke most sensibly. I shall never read his works without reflecting on the loss which the Church of God and the world has sustained by his death."

America, and the whole Methodist world, was struck with solemnity by the death of Wesley. It was like the fall of a monarch. Few could doubt, what his least partial biographer has declared, that "he was the most influential mind of the century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or perhaps millenniums, hence, if the present race of men should continue so long."[17] His last sermon was delivered at Leatherhead, on the very day on which Coke grasped again the hand of Asbury in Charleston, the 23d of February, 1791; on that day ended his public life, and then fell from his lips a trumpet of the truth which, probably, had sounded the everlasting Gospel oftener and more effectually than that of any other man for sixteen hundred years. The Reformers of Germany, Switzerland, France, and England wrought their great work more by the pen than by the voice. It has been admitted that Whitefield preached more eloquently, with few exceptions to larger assemblies, and traveled more extensively (though not more miles) than Wesley, within the same limits of time; but Wesley survived him more than twenty years, and his power has been more productive and permanent. Whitefield preached eighteen thousand sermons, more than ten a week for his thirty-four years of ministerial life. Wesley preached forty-two thousand and four hundred, after his return from Georgia, more than fifteen a week. His public life, ending on the 23d of February, 1791,

[17] This language is not in Southey's Life of Wesley, but in one of his letters to Wilberforce. Wilberforce's Correspondence, ii, 388.

stands out in the history of the world unquestionably pre-eminent in religious labors above that of any other man since the apostolic age.

Wesley not only saw the initiation of the Methodistic movement, but also conducted it through the successive and critical gradations of its development, and lived to see it at last an organic, a settled and permanent system, in the Old World and in the New, with a thoroughly-organized ministry, a well-defined and well-defended theology, the richest psalmody then known to English Protestantism, a considerable literature, not of the highest order, but therefore the better adapted to his numerous people, and a scheme of ecclesiastical discipline which time has proved to be the most effective known beyond the limits of the Papal Church. By his episcopal organization of his American Societies, and the legal settlement of his English Conference, he saw his great plan in a sense completed; it could be committed to the contingencies of the future to work out its appointed functions; and, after those two great events he was permitted to live long enough to control any incidental disturbances that might attend their first operations, and to pass through a healthful, serene conclusion of his long life He traveled about four thousand five hundred miles a year; and these travels, at the rate of more than the circumference of the globe every six years, were pursued on horseback down to nearly his seventieth year, with from two to four sermons daily, beginning at five o'clock in the morning. His publications, including abridgments and translations, amounted to about two hundred volumes, and were the groundwork of the extensive literature of Methodism, and of its important "Book Concerns." His most invidious though most entertaining biographer has acknowledged his ability as a legislator.

and conceded that "whatever power was displayed in the formation of the economy of Methodism was his own."[18] He began his great work not only without prestige, but in entirely adverse circumstances. The moral condition of the nation which required his extraordinary plans, was the most formidable difficulty to their prosecution. He threw himself out upon the general demoralization without reputation, without influential friends, without money, with no other resource than the soul within him and the God above him. Before he had fairly begun his great career, he was reduced even below the ordinary advantages of common English clergymen; he had become already the object of derision; he had no church, and was turned out of the pulpits of his brethren. Excepting some insignificant Societies, like that of Fetter Lane, the highway or the field and the reckless mob were all that remained to him. But he began his work; he united his rude converts into "Bands," formed "Classes," built chapels, appointed trustees, stewards, leaders, exhorters; organized a lay ministry, and rallied into it men of extraordinary characters and talents; founded the Conference; gave his Societies a discipline and a constitution, a literature, a psalmody, and a liturgy; saw his cause established in the United States with an episcopal organization, planted in the British North American Provinces and in the West Indies, and died at last with his system apparently completed, universally effective and prosperous, sustained by five hundred and fifty itinerant and thousands of local preachers, and more than a hundred and forty thousand members,[19] and so energetic that many men

[18] Southey's Wesley, chap. 29.

[19] Adding to the figures given at Wesley's last Conference the subsequent increase in America before his death.

who had been his co-laborers lived to see it the predominant body of Dissenters in the United Kingdom and the British Colonies, the most numerous Church of the United States of America, and successfully planted on most of the outlines of the missionary world.[20]

He lived to see his cause so prosperous in the new world, from Nova Scotia to the Antilles, as to afford to his dying eyes the vision of its triumph throughout the western hemisphere. His last letter to America was written on the 1st of February, one month and one day before his death.[21] "See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe," he said; "lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue,

> "'Though mountains rise, and oceans roll,
> To sever us in vain.'"

On receiving the news of his death all the Methodist churches, in the principal communities of America, were draped in mourning, and Coke and Asbury preached funeral sermons from Baltimore to New York, especially at the sessions of Conferences.

Asbury, again alone in his episcopal labors, continued his travels. He passed, for the first time, into New England, whither we shall follow him hereafter. Returning, he hastened southward to Georgia, and thence again over the Alleghanies to Tennessee and Kentucky; thence through the middle states, northward, into New England, as far as Boston and Lynn; thence westward to Albany, southward to Virginia, and back again to Baltimore, where, on the 30th of October, 1792, he

[20] History of the Religious Movement, etc., book v, chap. 12, where is given a *resume* of his ministerial and literary labors.

[21] To Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, Wesley's Works, vii, p. 237.

writes: "While we were sitting in the room at Mr. Rogers's in came Dr. Coke, of whose arrival we had not heard, and whom we embraced in great love." While Coke was yet in England, he received from Asbury (suffering from imputations from some of his brethren) a letter in which he says: "If yet in time, this brings greeting. Rejoice with me that the last year has been a general blessing to the Church of God in this wilderness. We humbly hope two thousand souls were born of God, one of which is well ascertained in Jersey and York. I have served the Church upward of twenty-five years in Europe and America. All the property I have gained is two old horses, the constant companions of my toil six if not seven thousand miles every year. When we have no ferry-boats they swim the rivers. As to clothing, I am nearly the same as at first; neither have I silver nor gold, nor any other property. My confidential friends know that I lie not in these matters. I am resolved not to claim any property in the printing-concern. Increase as it may, it will be sacred to invalid preachers, the colleges, and the schools. I would not have my name mentioned as doing, having, or being anything but dust. I soar, indeed, but it is over the tops of the highest mountains we have, which may vie with the Alps. I creep sometimes upon my hands and knees up the slippery ascent; and to serve the Church, and the ministers of it, what I gain is many a reflection from both sides of the Atlantic. I have lived long enough to be loved and hated, to be admired and feared. If it were not for the suspicions of some, and the pride and ignorance of others, I am of opinion I could make provision, by collections, profits on books, and donations in land, to take two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country. The Lord

begins to smile on our Kingswood School. One promising young man is gone forth, another is ready, and several have been under awakenings. None so healthy or orderly as our children, and some promise great talents. The obstinate and ignorant oppose, among preachers and people; while the judicious in Church and State admire and applaud."[22]

In two days after Coke's arrival at Baltimore the first regular General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was opened—the beginning of those quadrennial synods which have ever since been the supreme assembly of the denomination. Before, however, we can record its proceedings, we must repeatedly retrace our present period, for the episcopal labors we have been detailing were but a comparatively small portion of the historical achievements of the Church during these times.

[22] Etheridge's Coke, p. 232.

CHAPTER II.

MINISTERIAL TRAVELS AND LABORS FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE FIRST REGULAR GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1785–1792.

Whatcoat's Labors — Jesse Lee in the South — He forms the Design of Introducing Methodism into New England — Lee, Willis, and Asbury in Charleston, S. C. — Conversion of Edgar Wells — Methodism founded in Charleston — The First North Carolina Conference — Deplorable Fate of Beverly Allen — Lee advances northward and prepares to enter New England — Thomas Ware on Salem Circuit, N. J. — Conversion of Captain Sears — Review of Two Years — Ware in the State of New York — Striking Examples of his Usefulness — His Adventures among the Holston Mountains — A Night Storm — He labors in North Carolina — Destitution and Providential Relief — His Success — His Escape from a "Fortune" — His Return to the North — Review of Seven Years — Benjamin Abbott — Death of his Wife — He joins the Itinerancy — Scenes on Dutchess Circuit — On Long Island — In Philadelphia — Singular Power of his Preaching — Abbott and the Quakers — His Usefulness — Remarkable Scenes of his Ministry — Garrettson — Wesley proposes his Ordination as a Bishop — His Labors in Maryland — He extends Methodism up the Hudson — His Corps of Preachers — Condition of the Country — Great Success — Ashgrove — Ashton — "Black Harry" — An Attempt to Poison Garrettson — Methodism enters the Valley of Wyoming — Anning Owen — Northumberland Valley — Westward Movement of the Church.

Whatcoat has left us but brief notes of his travels and labors in the present period. Immediately after the Christmas Conference he took the field in Maryland and Delaware for about half a year, preaching "almost daily, sometimes twice a day," and administering the sacraments almost as frequently. In Kent County he records more than seventy-five baptisms on a single day—such had been the long privation of this ordinance among Methodist families! He wrote to Garrettson (now in

Nova Scotia) from Elktown, Md.: "I am in a strange land, and I think my natural disposition is to be little and unknown, content to live and die to God alone; and I find a willing mind to go to the ends of the earth if I can help forward the Redeemer's cause thereby. We have had a quickening among the people in these parts; some great quarter-meetings, happy seasons to my own soul and many others. Glory be to God for all his mercies!"[1] In 1786 he spent seven or eight months in Philadelphia and its neighborhood, and the next year penetrated to the west of Pennsylvania—to Alleghany, Bath, and Berkeley Circuits, where he spent nearly fourteen months supplying the settlements with the sacraments, and proclaiming the word in barns and woods. Again he was sent, in 1788–89, to Maryland and Delaware, the head-quarters of his charge, which was a district with no less than sixteen large circuits, extending from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and Redstone, from the Maryland peninsula to Ohio. His manners were devoutly grave, but relieved by affectionate cordiality, and he was both revered and loved by the people.[2] His preaching was often attended with overwhelming unction, and in the administration of the sacraments he was peculiarly impressive, rendering those solemnities, frequently, occasions of great effect. "On the 26th of April, 1789," he says, "at a Quarterly Meeting, held at the old meeting-house, near Cambridge, Dorset County, the Lord came

[1] Garrettson Papers at Rhinebeck, New York.

[2] "My late lamented friend, Dr. Thomas E. Bond, Sr., who knew him well, said to me: 'He was one of the purest spirits I ever knew. Everybody about the house loved him, cats, dogs, and all.' Mary Snethen said to me, that of all the pure and holy men that came to that old parsonage, [John-street,] he seemed to be the most heavenly-minded. He talked of heaven, he sang of heaven, and meditated of heaven."—*Wakeley*, p. 380.

in power at our sacrament; the cries of the mourners, and the ecstasies of believers, were such that the preacher's voice could scarcely be heard for the space of three hours; many were added to the number of true believers. At our Quarterly Meeting, held at St. Michael s, for Talbot Circuit, the power of the Lord was present to wound and to heal. The Sabbath following, our Quarterly Meeting held at Johnstown, for Caroline Circuit, was yet more glorious; the power of the Lord came down at our Love-feast. The house was filled with the members of our Societies, and great numbers of people were on the outside; the doors and windows were thrown open, and some thronged in at the latter. Such times my eyes never beheld before! The power of the Lord spread from circuit to circuit. O how delightful it is to preach glad tidings, when we see souls 'coming home to God, as doves to their windows!'"

In this year he traveled with Asbury to the North as far as New York, and westward across the Alleghanies to Fort Pitt, (Pittsburgh,) and thence to Uniontown, Pa., where he assisted the bishop at the first ordination beyond the mountains. Returning to Baltimore, they held on their route to Charleston, S. C., where they met the South Carolina Conference, and thence into Georgia, where also they held a session. They then hastened westward to the Alleghanies, and passed into Tennessee and Kentucky. He was present when Asbury laid John Tunnell to rest in the grave among the mountains, on their return. On again reaching Uniontown, Pa., he records that "in the last fifteen months we have traveled six thousand miles." In 1790 he was flying to and fro through the middle states, supplying the sacraments and preaching continually. In 1791 he was stationed in New York city, where he stayed some months, and

was then transferred to Baltimore, where he welcomed the first regular General Conference in 1792.

Jesse Lee was not at the Christmas Conference, as has been noticed; he preferred to pursue his circuit labors in the remote west of North Carolina, but before the end of the month in which the Conference was held, he joined Asbury on his first episcopal journey to the far South. Lee was startled to see the bishop enter a church in "full canonicals, gown, cassock, and bands," and hear him read Wesley's Prayer Book.[3] The staunch itinerant would never accept these supposed perversions of Methodist simplicity. Henry Willis also met them, and was sent forward to announce their appointments on the route to Charleston, preaching, himself, as he heralded them. An important event in Lee's life occurred at Cheraw. He met there a mercantile New Englander, who gave him such information of the eastern states as left upon his mind an irreversible conviction that it was his duty to pioneer the denomination into that part of the country. Asbury treated the impression as premature, if not extravagant, but Lee never abandoned the design; he discussed it with his ministerial brethren everywhere, and the prosperous Methodism of New England is to-day the result of his zealous tenacity.

At Georgetown the bishop preached on the 24th of February. "Just as they were about to start to the place of worship," says the biographer of Lee, "the gentleman at whose house they were staying excused himself from accompanying them, 'as it was his turn to superintend a ball that night.' This occurrence seems greatly to have disconcerted Mr. Lee. Indeed it appears, from the language of his Journal, that he had some misgivings as to the propriety of partaking of the hospitalities of one whose

[3] Dr. Lee's Life, etc., of Lee, p. 149.

regard for religion must have been very questionable. He 'had been praying earnestly that if the Lord had sent them to that place, he would open the heart and house of some other person to receive them.' His prayer was not in vain; for 'after meeting, Mr. Wayne,' a nephew of the celebrated General Wayne, 'invited them to call upon him, and from that time his house became a home for the ministers.' With this gentleman they took breakfast the following morning, and on resuming their journey he accompanied them to the ferry, and very generously paid for their passage across the river. It was the courtesy of this gentleman, in giving a letter of introduction to Mr. Willis, who had preceded the party to Charleston, that secured for them a cordial reception in that city." We have already seen the result of this letter; it procured the travelers a hospitable reception under the roof of Edgar Wells, a merchant of the city. When they arrived at his door, he was about to go to the theater. His contemplated amusement was abandoned, and the evening was spent in religious conversation and family worship. "From this time he began to seek after God; nor did he seek in vain. In the course of a few days he obtained the witness of his adoption, and was enabled to rejoice in God his Redeemer. He united himself to the Methodist Church, and continued to walk worthy of his high vocation, till a peaceful death finished with him the struggles of mortality."[4]

On the next day Lee delivered the first sermon from Isaiah liii, 5, 6, in an unoccupied Baptist Church. He had but about twenty hearers, but preached with effect, and "the people seemed quite amazed." Willis occupied the pulpit in the afternoon. At night Lee again proclaimed his message; "the people were a little moved," says

[4] Bishop J. O. Andrew, in Methodist Quarterly Review, 1830, p. 17.

Asbury. These services were on Sunday, the 27th of February; on the next Wednesday Asbury took the pulpit, and occupied it daily for a week. Methodism was thus founded in Charleston. The Wesleys had preached there in 1736, and Pilmoor in 1773, but no Society had been formed. Willis was now left in charge of the appointment, and the Church, with various fortunes, has never yielded the ground. "A happier selection than Willis," says a good authority, "could scarcely have been made. Deep piety, amiable manners, general intelligence, an entire devotion to the work, and the most inflexible perseverance, rendered this man of God eminently fit for the great work to which he had been designated. He entered upon his duties under many discouragements; but he succeeded in forming a small Society, and the work was so far prosperous that, when Bishop Asbury visited Charleston the next year, he found the congregation large, and the little flock encouraged to undertake the building of a house of worship. This undertaking appears to have been prosecuted with considerable spirit; and when the bishop visited them the following year, he found a commodious house of worship for the Methodist Episcopal Church. This was the house in Cumberland-street, which will long be remembered with affection as the birthplace of many scores of precious souls, who there received awakening and converting grace. The opening of this house was of vast importance to the interests of Methodism; it not only relieved the congregation from great inconvenience, but gave to them an established and permanent character. It was a public declaration that we had driven down our stake, and intended to hold on."[5]

Leaving Asbury, Lee resumed his travels in North

[5] Bishop Andrew.

Carolina, and continued them with energy and success till he again met the bishop at the first North Carolina Conference, begun on the 20th of April, 1785, and closed in two days. Twenty preachers were present, and the scene was full of cheerfulness and hope; for these pioneers of the wilderness had left their extended fields of labor "white unto the harvest." "The ministers had been successful, and had come up from their different fields of labor with tidings of success, bringing their own cheerful and happy hearts, a contribution to the quiet and harmony of the Conference. In summing up the actual additions to the ranks of Methodism, it was found that nine hundred and ninety-one persons had given in their adhesion to its principles, and their talents and influence to the promotion of its success in saving souls. Of these, according to Dr. Coke, one hundred and ten were in South Carolina, and had been brought into the Church chiefly through the instrumentality of a local preacher, who had recently settled in the state. The labors of the ministry had also extended into Georgia, and the whole state appears, on the plan of appointments, as a circuit, with a solitary minister to superintend its spiritual concerns!"[6]

Lee was already a champion among the itinerants. Another "strong man armed" was also present, whose subsequent history casts a deep shadow over the early annals of the denomination. Beverly Allen had been elected, at the Christmas Conference, for ordination, but, being absent, was now ordained by Asbury, in presence of his southern brethren, first to deacon's and then to elder's orders—supposed to be the first ordinations in the North Carolina Conference. He had been a devout and successful preacher, a man of extraordinary talents and

[6] Dr. Lee.

zeal, a correspondent of Wesley,[7] and was now a leader of the southern ranks of the ministry. He was commissioned to introduce Methodism into Georgia, and in the Minutes of this year his name stands as its solitary itinerant for that whole state. The next year he reported seventy-eight members there. For some years his influence rose continually in Georgia and South Carolina. He became the most prominent representative of Methodism in all that part of the country, having "an almost unparalleled popularity as a preacher."[8] He married into a highly respectable family, and became prominent in the community of Charleston. In the last year of our present period (1792) his name stands in the Minutes as "expelled." He had fallen in his strength and success, and his fall stunned for years his denomination in Charleston and all the neighboring regions. He sunk from bad to worse, and it was charitably supposed that he was insane. Two years after his expulsion he shot an eminent citizen, the marshal of the Federal Court of Georgia, who attempted to serve a writ upon him. He was imprisoned, and in peril of his life; some of his friends signed a petition in his behalf, alleging that he was a maniac; he escaped from the prison and disappeared in the new settlements of the far West. The early records of Methodism represent his final fate as lost in obscurity; but one of the most notable pioneers of the western itinerancy throws a gleam of lurid light upon his wretched end. "My father," writes this veteran, "sent me to school, boarding me at Dr. Beverly Allen's; but my teacher was not well qualified to teach correctly, and I made but small progress. I, however, learned to read, write, and cipher a little, but very imperfectly. Dr.

[7] See his Letters in the Arminian Magazine, 1792.
[8] Bishop Andrew.

Allen, with whom I boarded, had, in an early day, been a traveling preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was sent South to Georgia, as a very gentlemanly and popular preacher, and did much good. He married in that country a fine, pious woman, a member of the Church; but he, like David, in an evil hour, fell into sin, violated the laws of the country, and a writ was issued for his apprehension. He warned the sheriff not to enter his room, and assured him if he did he would kill him. The sheriff rushed upon him, and Allen shot him dead. He fled from that country to escape justice, and settled in Logan County, Ky., then called 'Rogues' Harbor.' His family followed him, and here he practiced medicine. To ease a troubled conscience he drank in the doctrine of Universalism; but he lived and died a great friend to the Methodist Church. It fell to my lot, after I had been a preacher several years, to visit the doctor on his dying bed. I talked to and prayed with him. Just before he died I asked him if he was willing to die and meet his final Judge with his Universalist sentiments. He frankly said he was not. He said he could make the mercy of God cover every case in his mind but his own, but he thought there was no mercy for him; and in this state of mind he left the world, bidding his family and friends an eternal farewell, warning them not to come to that place of torment to which he felt himself eternally doomed."[9]

Lee's next appointment was on Caroline Circuit, N. C., and in the year following he traveled Kent Circuit, Md. The latter included four large counties. His labors were herculean. He observes that in four weeks he had to preach thirty-one sermons, and lead fifty-two classes.

[9] Autobiography of Rev. Peter Cartwright, D. D., p. 28. New York. 1856.

Three hundred were added to the Church during his ministry on this circuit, and such scenes as have already been described as attending his preaching were of frequent occurrence. He records seasons "when weeping was heard in every part of the house," when his "own heart seemed ready to break" with sympathy for his hearers, and his tears suppressed, for a time, his utterance.

His appointment in 1787 was to Baltimore City Circuit. His large spirit could not brook the restrictions imposed by the usual plans of even circuit labor. He went forth from the chapels of the city, and took his stand on the Common, and here, as usual, his popular address and fervent eloquence won the interest and touched the sympathies of the multitude. He preached in the market on Howard's Hill, also in that on the Point, and thus brought the sound of the divine word within the hearing of multitudes of sailors and the neglected poor, who otherwise might have never heard it. He had his usual success in Baltimore. "Many souls," he writes, "have been awakened and converted in the Circuit this year. I suppose there has not been so great a work among the people for eight or ten years as there has been this year. And in many places it is still progressing. There have been much pain and sorrow, and many tears shed, at our parting."

We find him next on Flanders Circuit, the first Methodist preacher who visited that part of New Jersey. The spirit and power of his ministry continued. God had evidently raised him up and thrust him forth for great deeds. The time to attempt them was now at hand. On leaving the Flanders Circuit he attended a Conference in New York city, in 1789, and thence set his face toward New England, whither we shall hereafter follow him.

Thomas Ware resumed, after the Christmas Conference, his labors on the Maryland Peninsula—the garden of Methodism. "There were many," he says, "very many, on this favored shore, who had been awakened and converted to God through the instrumentality of the Methodist preachers, and especially that of Joseph Cromwell, who, though he could not write his name, preached in the demonstration of the Spirit and with an authority that few could withstand. By his labors thousands, of all classes and conditions in society, had been brought into the fold, and were walking worthy of their profession." Other laborers besides Cromwell had reaped there the richest harvests—the most historical evangelists of early Methodism. Ware received Coke there, as we have seen, both before and after the General Conference. In 1785 he was prostrated by sickness, but was appointed to Salem Circuit, N. J., with Phœbus and Sparks—a circuit whose territory is now supplied by scores of preachers. Here he had the satisfaction of laboring among his kindred, and among his converts were two of his own sisters. Methodism had found its way into this section before him, chiefly by Abbott's labors. The war which had just terminated had raged in the upper part of New Jersey; but here its effects were less felt. Many parts of Cumberland and Cape May were but thinly inhabited, and the inhabitants were generally favorable to the cause of the Revolution. When the state of things in West Jersey, in consequence of its becoming the seat of war, rendered it next to impossible for the preachers to labor longer there, they turned their attention to the South, and one of them by the name of James visited Cumberland and Cape May. His manner was, to let his horse take its own course, and, on coming to a house, to inform the family that he had come to

"warn them and the people of their neighborhood to prepare to meet their God;" and also to direct them to notify their neighbors that on a given day one would, by divine permission, be there to "deliver a message from God" to them, noting his appointment in a book kept for that purpose; and then, if he found they were not offended, to sing and pray with them, and depart. Some families were much affected, and seemed to hold themselves bound to do as he directed. Others told him he need give himself no further trouble, for they would neither invite their neighbors, nor open their doors to receive him if he came. His singular course occasioned excitement and alarm through many parts. Some seemed to think him a messenger from the invisible world. Others said, "He is mad." Many, however, gave out the appointments as directed; and when the time came, he would be sure to be present. By these means the minds of the people were stirred up, and many were awakened. While thus laboring to sow the seed of the Gospel, he came one evening to the house of a Captain Sears, and having a desire to put up for the night, made application to him for entertainment. The captain was then in the yard, surrounded by a number of barking dogs, which kept up such a noise that he could not at first hear what the preacher said. At this he became very angry and stormed boisterously at them, for which the preacher reproved him. When they became silent so that he could be distinctly heard, the preacher renewed his request to stay over night. The captain paused a long time, looking steadily at him, and then said, "I hate to let you stay the worst of any man I ever saw; but as I never refused a stranger a night's lodging in all my life, you may alight." Soon after entering the house he requested a private room where he might retire. The

family were curious to know for what purpose he retired, and contrived to ascertain, when it was found that he was on his knees. After continuing a long time in secret devotion, he came into the parlor and found supper prepared. Captain Sears seated himself at table, and invited his guest to come and partake with him. He came to the table and said, "With your permission, captain, I will ask the blessing of God upon our food before we partake it;" to which the captain assented. During the evening the preacher had occasion to reprove his host several times. In a few days the captain attended a military parade; and his men, having heard that the man who had made so much noise in the country had spent a night with him, inquired what he thought of this singular person. "Do you ask what I think of the stranger?" said he; "I know he is a man of God." "Pray how do you know that, captain?" inquired some. "How do I know it?" he replied, "I will tell you honestly—the devil trembled in me at his reproofs." "And so it was," says Ware, "the evil spirit found no place to remain in his heart. By such means, the work was commenced in this region, and spread among the people. I have spent many a comfortable night under the hospitable roof of Captain Sears. He lived long an example of piety—the stranger's host and comforter, and especially the preacher's friend." Ware reviewed at the close of his labors here with gratitude the two years which had passed since the organization of the Church. "Our harmony," he says, "continued the same as it was before, while our labor had been crowned with much greater success, in consequence of having the ordinances of God duly administered among us. In these two years we admitted thirty-four preachers, and had an accession of three thousand eight hundred and three members. We also greatly

enlarged our borders, extending our labors to Georgia at the south, and the great valley of the Mississippi at the west."

In 1786 he was appointed to Long Island, but supplying his appointments, for a time, by local preachers, he extended his labors to other parts of the state. He went to New Rochelle, where the war had utterly extinguished the Methodist Society formed by Asbury. There was not now a single known Methodist east of the Hudson River above New York city. He reached Bedford, where a Mr. Eames introduced him to his wife as a Methodist preacher, and said, "You know I told you God would send the Methodist preachers among us, when I dreamed that I saw Mr. Wesley riding through the country with his Bible open in his hand." After spending a short time with this family, during which he preached repeatedly and formed a class, he set out on his return to New Rochelle, but was overtaken by one of the most extraordinary snow-storms he ever witnessed. He was driven to the necessity of putting up at an inn, where he was detained for a week. The landlady was deeply impressed the first time he spoke to her on the subject of religion; but the innkeeper himself, though civil, appeared to be out of his reach. Both of them were very fond of singing; and as Ware's voice was good, they seemed much delighted with some spiritual songs which he sung for them. On the third night of this tremendous storm, while sitting around the cheerful fire, listening to the howling of the wind, and the beating of snow and hail against the windows, he perceived that his host and hostess were pensive; so he sung them one of his favorite pieces, with which they were much affected. He then kneeled down to pray; and they, for the first time, fell upon their knees. After prayer he retired, leaving them

both in tears. "After thirty years I was again," he says, "appointed to Long Island, where my host visited me. 'Father Ware,' he said, 'I am happy to see you once more. Have you forgotten the snow-storm which brought you and salvation to my house?' The family had been saved." Ware did good service during this year, not only on Long Island, but in much of the neighboring country.

The transitions of the early itinerants, from one part of the continent to the other, astonish us even in this day of ready intercommunication. We find Ware the next year, 1787, sounding the alarm amid the Holston Mountains, and down among the frontier settlements of Tennessee. Many were his adventures, his perils, and victories there, but they will come more appropriately under our attention hereafter when we shall follow the march of Methodism into the valley of the Mississippi. He suffered from want of the common necessaries of life, from the severity of the winter and mountain storms, from savage Indians, and scarcely less savage white settlers. He wandered often, lost in the forests of the mountains, slept in the woods, preached in log-cabins or the open air, for there were as yet no chapels, however humble, in regions which were hundreds of miles in extent; but he and his few fellow-itinerants were there fortifying the frontier camp of Methodism, whence it was to commence its advance, as "an army with banners," over all the immense valley of the Mississippi, and conquer its way to the Rocky Mountains and to the shores of the Pacific. "There were many," he says in this region, "both of those who had taken the Lord for their portion and those who as yet had not, who manifested a desire to have him the God of their children, and therefore presented them to be baptized. Of the latter class the hearts of the parents

were usually touched when their children were dedicated to God in accordance with his own institution. Sometimes the scene was truly affecting, when the thought was impressed upon the minds of parents that their children, according to the declaration of the Saviour, belonged to the kingdom of heaven, while they did not. I cannot but regret that I did not keep a record of the number of these lambs of Christ's flock which I have held in my arms and dedicated to him. I doubt if any traveling preacher could produce a more extended list. For a time I attempted this task; but in Holston, Clinch, French Broad, and New River, there were so many children presented for baptism that I found it difficult, and gave it up." Wesley's provision for the sacraments, in the American Church, had been found necessary indeed in the eastern states, but in these western wilds it was a special blessing. Nearly the whole population of the Holston region had been destitute of the ordinances of religion, until the Methodist itinerants began to traverse their rugged and magnificent country. Hundreds of children and youth had not only not been baptized, but had never witnessed the solemnities of public worship.

In 1789 Ware accompanied Asbury back over the Blue Ridge into North Carolina, and attended a Conference, at M'Knight's Church, on the 11th of April. It was one of the most interesting sessions he had ever witnessed. Great grace rested on both preachers and people, and much good resulted. Thus we find him in another remote section of the continent. By this Conference he was appointed to Caswell Circuit, N. C. At the close of the session he set out for his field of labor, poorly clad and nearly penniless, "but happy in God." In the Holston country there had been but little

money, and clothing was very dear. His coat was worn through at the elbows, and he had not a whole under garment left; and as for boots, he had none. "But," he says, "my health was good, and I was finely mounted. I could have sold my horse for sufficient to purchase another to answer my purpose, and clothe myself decently; but he had borne me safely through so many dangers, and once, at least, by his instinctive sagacity, rescued me from perishing, that I had resolved that nothing but death should separate us. This, however, soon occurred; for in a few days this noble animal, my sole property in the world at that time, sickened and died. So there I was, an entire stranger, several hundred miles from home, without horse, decent clothing, or funds. But I was not without friends. A good brother with whom I stayed gave me a horse for four weeks on trial, and I determined to go to Newbern and try my credit for clothing." The Methodist itinerants were, however, men of absolute faith, and expected God to provide for them. Ware passed on and called at the house of a gentleman by the name of Howe, who, though not a Methodist, was friendly to the denomination. His inquiries about the western country led to the disclosure of the preacher's destitute condition, with which he was touched. He pressed the itinerant to spend a few days with him, but the latter told him time was a talent with which God had intrusted him, and as it was all he could call his own, he must hasten on to his work. "Earthly treasures I had none," writes the suffering evangelist, "and had abandoned all means of acquiring them. But a heavenly inheritance I hoped, with increasing zeal and activity, to seek throughout my life. I then informed him of my business to Newbern, where I knew no person. After I had mounted and left this gentleman he called me back,

saying he had a store in Newbern, and wished me to hand a letter which he gave me to his clerk. Little did I think, at the time, that it contained directions to his clerk to let me have what I might want out of the store to the amount of twenty-five dollars, for which he would never afterward allow me to pay him a single cent. Thus did the Lord provide!"

He labored mightily on this circuit, and here again he found the urgent necessity of the sacraments among the people, and administered them to the eager crowds with the deepest emotion. Not a few affecting scenes occurred in these solemnities. In one place he says, "In the time of the Revolutionary War their ministers had left them, and they had long been without the form of religion. At their request I went to preach to them and baptize their children, and I found them ripe for the Gospel. The sight of so many children brought to be dedicated to God in baptism, for there were scores of them, deeply interested me. I addressed the parents, who were much affected, and their cries so increased my sensibility that, for a time, my power of speech was wholly suspended. I could not, by any exertion I could make, articulate the name of the child. This was observed, and occasioned great excitement of feeling among the people. But when I had so recovered as to be able to proceed, many were melted into tears. After the meeting was concluded many followed me to the house where I went to lodge. At night, although no appointment had been given out, the house was filled with people, and I could not decline preaching to them. In the midst of my discourse the mother of the family got down upon her knees, and such was her state of feeling that, in that attitude, she made her way to the table, where I was standing, and begged me to pray for

ber. In a few moments the whole congregation was in commotion. I continued to pray and exhort till midnight. The work advanced, and in six weeks we had in this place a Society of eighty members, mostly heads of families. This event I have always deemed a divine sanction of infant baptism. If I ever witnessed a work of God among any people I witnessed it here, and it evidently commenced with the baptizing of infant children." His second year in this part of the country was on a district comprising eight circuits, some of which extended into Virginia. His word was in demonstration and power throughout his vast field. "At one of our quarterly meetings on New River," he writes, "a religious concern was waked up in many, which pervaded a large district of country, and suspended for many weeks almost all worldly concerns. In one family, where I passed many happy days, there were thirty who claimed to be born again, twelve of whom were whites, the fruits of that meeting. This was the family of Gen. Bryan, who was a barrister at law, a professed deist. The general was awakened and converted at this meeting. He became a distinguished patron of Methodism, and died happy, lifting his arm in token of victory when his tongue failed to articulate words." This quarterly meeting was indeed a memorable occasion. "On Saturday many people attended, and great power was manifested during the public exercises. On Sunday morning the love-feast was appointed to commence at eight o'clock. By seven the house was nearly full, and many were prostrate on the floor, and the surrounding grove was made vocal by the prayers and hymns of multitudes as they were approaching the place. When the house was filled, those who could not get in were engaged in some religious exercise without, and numbers

were slain under the trees. A son of Col. Taylor, of Tar River, went about among the people, praising God, and telling them what the Lord had done for his soul; and wherever he came they were melted into tears. His appearance was sufficient to disarm the most stout-hearted of them. As to preaching, it was out of the question; nor did there appear to be any need of it, for all seemed to yield to the gracious influence, and with melting hearts to say, 'This is the work of God.' Something like this had been witnessed under the ministry of Boardman, King, and others; but Rankin, Wesley's general assistant, so violently opposed it that it soon declined. This circumstance was remembered, and all who were the real friends of experimental religion agreed that it behooved us to let the Lord work in his own way."

Ware won the hearts of the people by his natural amiability, as well as by his Christian devotion, and thereby encountered some temptations. He made his escape homeward from North Carolina in haste from one of these perils that might have changed the whole tenor of his remaining life. A little before he was called to bid a final adieu to this state, he was confined, by indisposition, at the house of a very aged couple, who had no children. They had lived in good repute as Christians, and deemed themselves such until the baptizing in the woods. On that memorable day they were brought to see themselves sinners, without any well-grounded hope. They were the first who offered themselves for membership in the new Society, and they continued to adorn their profession by well-ordered lives. They had given him many demonstrations of their affectionate regard, but until this visit he had not known the extent of it. Being in possession of a farm and mill, with other property, and advanced in

life, they desired him to write their will. He objected as not understanding the form which might be requisite. They said the document would be simple, and might be easily drawn. It was to provide, that, on condition of his remaining with them through their short stay in this world, all they had should be his. "This, he says, "presented a strong inducement to exchange a life of poverty and toil for one of affluence and ease. Had I accepted the offer, my history would doubtless have been very different from what it is. But I could not do it with a good conscience, so I bid them and North Carolina adieu forever, and returned to see my friends in New Jersey."

He had now been absent from the North about six years, amid scenes of severe privation and romantic adventure. Having reached the Philadelphia Conference of 1791, and received an appointment in Delaware, he reviewed with devout gratitude the prosperity of the Church since its Episcopal organization. "Great," he affirms, "had been its harmony and success. It had received in these years an accession of sixty-seven traveling preachers, and sixty-four thousand and thirty-nine members; fifty-one thousand one hundred and fifty-five whites, and twelve thousand eight hundred and eighty-four colored. In almost every part of the United States the enemies of the Lord were overcome by thousands, for the work was of God, and who can contend with the King of kings, while the instruments he has chosen to carry on his work are faithful?" In 1792 he was sent to Staten Island, but was soon transferred to the Susquehanna District, Pa., as presiding elder, an office which he filled, on various districts, for sixteen years, a longer time, in regular succession, than it had fallen to the lot of any other man.

Benjamin Abbott continued his irregular but effective labors in New Jersey down to the early part of the year 1789, when he joined the Conference and gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry. In the preceding summer his excellent wife died in the faith, believing that God called her to heaven in order to release her husband from domestic cares that he might pursue, without embarrassment, his evangelical travels and toils. She died suddenly, but with full preparation for the solemn event. "I asked her," says Abbott, "if she saw heaven sweetly opened before her. She was speechless, but made three nods with her head without either sigh, groan, or throb. Her manner of life from the time she became a Christian was exemplary; she set apart three times a day for private prayer, and I never knew her omit it; and when I was absent she kept up family prayer." She clapped her hands with rapture as she departed. Abbott immediately settled his temporal affairs, and, at the next New Jersey Conference, was received as a "regular traveling preacher," and appointed to Dutchess Circuit, New York. It was a new field, and he encountered not a few difficulties in it. He was sometimes mobbed, and was often assailed by sectarian zealots, clerical as well as lay, who insisted on the discussion of his theology, especially his Arminianism. His righteous soul was vexed and wearied by such rencounters. The political revolution of the country had left the popular mind in an extraordinary fermentation. The agitations of the war being over, the people sought new excitements and new topics of discussion; wherever Abbott went he found them ready for polemical contests; they thronged his assemblies, some weeping, some falling down as dead men under his word, but many prepared to combat him, not only at the door after his meetings,

but while he was in the act of preaching. Scenes were of daily occurrence which our modern sense of the decorum of public worship render almost inconceivable. The good man was sorely perplexed; he was compelled to become a polemic, a character which illy befitted him; but he sturdily fought his way forward, and at the end of the year reported about one hundred new members in his Societies. He penetrated as far north as Albany; "the alarm," he says, "spread far and wide," and in some of his assemblies "a dozen fell to the floor, and there was weeping and praising of God all through the house;" some were justified, some sanctified, and others "seemed lost in the ocean of redeeming love." The next year also he spent in traveling up and down the Hudson, and received into his young Societies about a hundred converts. The ensuing year he was sent to Long Island; he traversed his extensive circuit with the zeal and power of an apostle, triumphing over mobs, preaching the word daily with demonstrations that often overwhelmed his assemblies, prostrating many of his hearers to the floor. He formed numerous Societies, and labored especially to lead their members into the "deep things of God," his favorite theme being entire sanctification. He received between eighty and ninety souls into the communion of the Church during this year.

At the next Conference he requested Asbury to appoint him to the scenes of his early labors in New Jersey, that he might see his "children in the Gospel" on the Salem Circuit. On his way he paused at Philadelphia, and in St. George's Church, where he was to preach, the impression of his introductory prayer was so extraordinary that no preaching was possible after it. "The power of the Lord," he writes, "descended on the people in such a manner that some fell to the floor under the oper-

ation thereof; the cry of mourners, and the joyful acclamations of Christians, were so great that I could not be heard. Many cried aloud, and among them was Brother Cann, one of our preachers, who was wonderfully overcome by the divine power. When he came to, he stepped into the desk and publicly acknowledged that he had ever been an enemy to people's crying aloud, but that he then could not help it himself; that he could no more refrain from it than he could from dying if God were to send the messenger of death to arrest his body. Brother M'Claskey went through the house among the mourners, praying for and admonishing all that came in his way, and requested me to do the same; accordingly I left the pulpit without attempting to preach, and followed his example. Our meeting continued until near eleven o'clock. No doubt that meeting is well remembered by many of our friends in Philadelphia. O may its good effects be seen in eternity! It was a gracious time to many souls; several professed justification, and some sanctification."

Again, among his former neighbors, he went from place to place like "a flame of fire." "There," he says, "I met many of my dear old friends whom I had not seen for about nine years; many of them were as happy as they could live." All felt that his mode of preaching, his peculiar power, was anomalous, mysterious, but also that it was beneficent; if it observed not the dignities of public worship, still it accomplished the ends of the Gospel, it awakened the heedless, reformed the profligate, led believers into a sanctified life—it awoke the dead in trespasses and sins, and not only crowded the chapels, but mightily recruited the Societies. Almost everywhere multitudes still fell, as dead men, under his marvelous power. If sober observers were disposed to revolt at the scene, they were

yet afterward constrained to acknowledge that the moral result of his preaching was good, and permanently good. Even some of the quiet Quakers declared that his spirit was right, and his peculiar power an unquestionable inspiration. He preached in their meeting-houses; they attended his congregations in barns and private houses, and sometimes rose, amid the clamors of mobs, and bore their "testimony" that the power of God was with him. The rabble often beset him, sometimes with concerted plans of hostility; but he never feared them, and they always came off defeated. At one of his appointments they determined to frustrate him. The assembly was large; "when," he writes, "we went into the house as many people followed us as could well crowd in and stand on their feet. I took my stand near the door, there being a considerable number outside. Two men followed us into the house, who appeared ill-disposed; one of them took his stand near the middle of the house, where he remained during the meeting, without offering any disturbance; the other stood about three feet from the door with a truncheon in his hand about two feet long; three or four others remained outside the door with like weapons in their hands. I sung and kneeled down to pray before either of them offered any interruption; but when I besought God to visit that part of his vineyard, and to make it as famous for virtue as it had been for vice, one of them replied, 'That it was as good already as any other part he had known,' and made use of several other expressions during the time of prayer. When I had done prayer, I asked him if he knew that he had violated the laws of the land, and, if they were put in force, that he had forfeited twenty pounds, and must either give security for his future good behavior or go to jail. I then charged him at his peril to desist and give no further interruption; he

made several replies, and appeared very vicious. An old Quaker woman, who sat just at my elbow, seeing the man's conduct, and hearing what had passed, bade me not be afraid, and put me in mind of the sufferings which their friends had undergone for the cause of God. I was truly glad to find her an advocate for Jesus, though I bless God I did not feel the fear of man. I proceeded and gave out my text, 'I have a message from God unto thee.' Judges iii, 20. I had not spoken long before he began again to interrupt me, raising himself on his toes to see if the others were at hand; but the door being surrounded by a number of the most respectable inhabitants, those club gentry were either ashamed or afraid, so that they kept their distance. I soon found that it would not answer to dispute, and therefore, without any regard to what he was saying, I began to pour out the terrors of the law upon him in the most awful manner I was capable of. I soon saw his countenance change, and he cried out, 'Is it me, sir, you mean?' 'Yes,' said I, 'you are the very man, and I have a message from God unto you;' which I delivered in plain terms, and began to pray for him. He quickly discovered a disposition to get out of the house; but this he could not hastily do, the crowd was so great in the door. His confusion was great, and he cried out, 'Do not judge! do not judge!' At length he got out, and hallooed amen several times, but he soon gave that up. A Quaker gentleman, being at the door, said to him as he went out, 'Thou hast met with thy match.' I have since understood that he had anchored his vessel in the Delaware, two or three miles distant, in order to attend this meeting, and had sworn that he never meant to weigh anchor again until he had driven every Methodist out of the region. While I was praying for him God convinced a woman of sin, who soon

after got her soul converted, and with her husband joined Society. Blessed be God, notwithstanding all the malice of men and devils, we had a solemn and profitable time to many souls, who were broken into tenderness. Soon after a Society was formed, and they became a precious people. I left the circuit after six months, having received eighty-five members into Society, and seen about fifty sanctified by the mighty power and grace of God. There was a great revival among the Classes. May the Lord be mindful of them, and preserve them in his holy fear!"

At another meeting he says, "The power of the Lord arrested a young Quaker, and he fell to the floor as if he had been shot. His mother being present, cried out, 'My son is dead! my son is dead!' I replied, 'Your son is not dead; look to yourself, your son is not dead;' and in a few minutes we had a number slain before the Lord. An old Quaker stood with tears in his eyes. I said to him, 'Look to yourself; this was the way with you when you had the life and power of God among you. Read Sewel's History of the People called Quakers, and you will find there that John Audland, a young man, was preaching in a field near Bristol, and the people fell to the ground before him, and cried out under the mighty power of God.' The man of the house brought the book, and read the passage before the congregation, and he then acknowledged it to be the work of the Lord. I attempted to meet the class, but did not speak to above two or three, when the people fell before the Lord as men slain in battle, and we had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus. The young Quaker and several others professed that God had set their souls at liberty, several joined Society, and we had a precious time. When I went on the circuit there were about six or seven in Society at that place, and when I left it there

were about thirty-six, six or seven of whom had been Quakers. At this place our meetings were generally so powerful that I never regularly met the class during the time I was on the circuit, for we always had the shout of a king in the camp of Jesus. Glory to God!"

The extraordinary events of his ministry, while they interest us, inexpressibly, as illustrations of his singular power and of the simple and rude character of the times, perplex us also with many problems, of which it is perhaps vain to attempt any explanation. One thing at least is clear, there could be no moral stagnation in any place which he entered. The whole community for miles around was stirred to its obscurest depths. All talked about him; the friendly defended and prayed with tears for him, the hostile disputed about him, assailed him, were prostrated by him. Few, if any, however indifferent or reckless about matters of religion, could, if within ten miles of his routes, remain undisturbed. They were compelled to share the general sensation of favorable or hostile interest, compelled to think or talk on the questions with which his presence startled the whole population. This, at least, was a blessing. By it hundreds, if not thousands, otherwise inaccessible to the Gospel, were brought to reflect, to pray, and to amend their lives; and it was especially true that the grossest sinners, the ignorant and degraded, who could be aroused to religious inquiry by none of the customary means, were seized, as it were, by this man's strange power and dragged up into the light out of their darkest abysses, and compelled to think, and often to pray and cry out in an agony of earnestness, "What shall we do to be saved?" He crowded the Methodist classes of New Jersey with such souls, reclaimed, purified, and not a few of them, for years after his death, models of the purest Christian life

In the latter years of his career we are, more than ever, startled by the anomalous records of his journals. He had been so accustomed to see his hearers fall insensible under his preaching, that, in his honest simplicity, he now evidently considered such demonstrations the necessary proofs of the usefulness of his ministry; he everywhere expected them, and, in fact, almost everywhere had them. Sometimes they took a character of undeniable extravagance; his own simple but Christian good sense could hardly fail to perceive this fact; but to him it was only proof of the mixture of human infirmity with the work of the divine Spirit; and his generous soul had no difficulty in excusing human weakness when redeemed, as he believed in these cases, by divine power and overshadowed by divine glory. Garrettson and Asbury deemed it proper at times to control, if not restrain him; but they seem at last to have concluded that he had a peculiar work to do, as an altogether peculiar man, and gave him free course.

His next circuit was that of Trenton, still within his old range. He had no sooner entered upon its territory than the usual effects attended his word. "On my way," he writes, "I attended the Quarterly Meeting at Bethel; after preaching and exhortation on Saturday, we adjourned our meeting until Sunday morning. Next morning the love-feast was opened, and the people began to speak their experiences very feelingly. After several had spoken, and a few exhortations had been given, I arose and exhorted them to look for sanctification, for now was the day of God's power; and the power of the Lord fell on them in such a manner that they fell to the floor, all through the house, up stairs and down, so that speaking experiences was now at an end." The "public preaching" had to be dispensed with that morning; the preach-

ers were employed in counseling and praying with the awakened multitude; the "slain and wounded lay all through the house," and the meeting lasted from nine o'clock in the morning till near sunset.

Abbott continued to labor in New Jersey during most of the remainder of our present period with undiminished success. He formed the first Methodist Society of New Brunswick, consisting of nine members. At Princeton, also, he says, "the Lord raised up a Society of nine persons before I left the circuit, glory to God!" He subsequently went to Maryland, whither we shall follow him in due time.

Freeborn Garrettson was ordained at the Conference of 1784, and appointed to Nova Scotia. His labors in that province were extraordinary in their extent and success, but they will come under our notice hereafter. In April, 1787, he returned to the United States, by way of Boston, where he preached in private houses, not being admitted to its pulpits. At Providence and Newport he addressed large assemblies. Arriving in New York he hastened to the Conference at Baltimore. Wesley had been so impressed, by his success in Nova Scotia, that he sent a request to the Conference for his ordination as superintendent, or bishop, for the British dominions in America—a vast diocese, comprising not only the north-eastern provinces and the Canadas, but also the West India Islands. "Dr. Coke," writes Garrettson, "as Mr. Wesley's delegate and representative, asked me if I would accept of the appointment. I requested the liberty of deferring my answer until the next day. I think on the next day the doctor came to my room and asked me if I had made up my mind to accept of my appointment; I told him I had upon certain conditions. I observed to him that I was willing to go on a

tour, and visit those parts to which I was appointed, for one year; and if there was a cordiality in the appointment among those whom I was requested to serve, I would return to the next Conference and receive ordination for the office of superintendent. His reply was, 'I am perfectly satisfied,' and he gave me a recommendatory letter to the brethren in the West Indies, etc. I had intended, as soon as Conference rose, to pursue my voyage to the West India Islands, to visit Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, and in the spring to return. What transpired in the Conference during my absence I know not; but I was astonished, when the appointments were read, to hear my name mentioned to preside in the Peninsula." Wesley was deeply grieved by this disappointment. The biographer of Garrettson ascribes it to the unwillingness of the American preachers to have him so entirely separated from them. He was thus detained in the states, and resumed his labors in his old field of the Maryland Peninsula, where he traveled about twelve months, visiting, as elder, every circuit and nearly every congregation. "Multitudes," says his biographer, "flocked to hear the word, some excited from curiosity to see the man of whom so much had been said in former days, some from a desire to 'learn the way of the Lord more perfectly,' and numbers more to hear again from the lips of this flaming messenger of Christ those precious truths which they had found to be 'the power of God to their salvation.' So great, indeed, was the attention given to the 'words of this life,' that Mr. Garrettson observes, 'that it seemed as if they would all become Methodists.'"

In May, 1788, he passed to New York, designing to pioneer Methodism into New England; and he might thus have anticipated the great work and honor of Jesse Lee, had he not found Hickson, the preacher, in New

York, dying. He was detained to supply his place. In Nova Scotia and on the Maryland Peninsula he had acted as presiding elder, traveling at large, superintending the circuit preachers, and administering the sacraments. Such were the functions of the elders ordained at the Christmas Conference, though the office, or at least the designation of presiding elders, proper, was not inserted in the Minutes till years later. He was now charged with this authority, to extend the march of the Church up the Hudson. Many young itinerants, stalwart, and flaming with the zeal of the Gospel, had appeared in the field about New York. Asbury requested Garrettson to take charge of a band of them and lead them up the river. Methodism had not extended northward further than Westchester County, if we except the Ashgrove Society, which was still solitary in the wilderness of Washington County, for Abbott's labors in Dutchess County were at a later date. Garrettson was uneasy about his new commission, being an utter stranger to the country, knowing not one of its inhabitants, and unaware probably of the obscure Ashgrove settlement. His anxiety led him to "much prayer" for divine direction, and affected his sleep. He had in his dreams a sublime vision. "It seemed," he says, "as if the whole country up the North River, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view. After the Conference adjourned, I requested the young men to meet me. Light seemed so reflected on my path that I gave them directions where to begin, and which way to form their circuits. I also appointed the time for each quarterly meeting, requested them to take up a collection in every place where they preached, and told them that I should go up the river to the extreme parts of the work, visiting the towns and cities on the way, and, on my

return, visit them all, and hold their quarterly meetings. I had no doubt but that the Lord would do wonders, for the young men were pious, zealous, and laborious." These young men were Peter Moriarty, Albert Van Nostrand, Cornelius Cook, Andrew Harpending, Darius Dunham, Samuel J. Talbot, David Kendall, Lemuel Smith, and Samuel Wigton. Some of them became historic characters in the Church. They formed six circuits, from New Rochelle to Lake Champlain, and thus was the denomination founded all along the Hudson, dotting, in our day, its beautiful towns and villages, on both banks, with Methodist edifices—a chapel and a parsonage in almost every hamlet.

The Revolutionary War had raged through this whole region, from the St. Lawrence to New York. Religion had everywhere declined. On the west of the Hudson the settlements were new, the roads bad, the accommodations for the itinerants hardly better than on the western frontier. On the eastern bank all the country north of Lansingburgh was in a similar condition.[9] Drunkenness, profanity, and speculative infidelity were general. Garrettson, having sent his young men up the river, soon after set out himself. He ascended its east bank through New Rochelle, North Castle, Bedford, Peekskill, to Rhinebeck, preaching in all the towns on his route. At Rhinebeck, destined to be the retreat of his last years, he was entertained by Thomas Tillotson, Esq., and preached repeatedly in a barn to constantly increasing congregations. On his return he found that his itinerants were almost everywhere prevailing over opposition, and forming prosperous Societies. "Many houses," he writes, "and hands and hearts were opened, and before the commencement

[9] Bangs's Life of Garrettson, p. 172.

of the winter we had several large circuits formed, and the most of the preachers were comfortably situated; sinners in a variety of places began to inquire what they should do to be saved. Satan and his children were much alarmed, and began on every hand to threaten us. Some said, 'They are good men;' others said, 'Nay, they are deceivers of the people.' A stranger from Vermont, on his way down the country, informed the people that we were spread all over the country through which he came. This sudden spread of our preachers caused some person to say, 'I know not from whence they all come, unless from the clouds.' Others said, 'The king of England hath sent them to disaffect the people, and they did not doubt but they would bring on another war;' while others gave it as their opinion that we were the false prophets spoken of in Scripture, who should come in the last days, and deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Among others, the ministers of the different denominations were alarmed, fearing lest we should break up their congregations, and, frequently coming to hear, some of them openly opposed, declaring publicly that the doctrine was false. The power of the Lord attended the word, a great reformation was seen among the people, and many were enabled to speak freely and feelingly of what God had done for their souls. My custom was to go around the district every three months, and then return to New York, where I commonly stayed about two weeks. In going once around I usually traveled about a thousand miles, and preached upward of a hundred sermons."

A venerable authority, familiar with all this region, informs us that "Samuel Wigton and Lemuel Smith were sent to the extreme north, one to Cambridge Circuit, and the other to Champlain, or rather they pro-

ceeded to form circuits which were to be called by those names. Both came together to Hampton, Washington County, and calling at the house of Samuel Bibbins, opened to him their mission. They were made welcome to his hospitalities, and permitted to preach there. Samuel Bibbins, jr., declared that he had seen these two men in a dream, and knew them as soon as he cast his eyes upon them. At the first meeting the husband, wife, and son, Samuel, with many others, were awakened. A class was immediately formed, and thenceforward Bibbins's house was the home of the Methodist preachers, and, as often as was required, the place of preaching. Samuel Bibbins, jr., was unusually gifted in prayer and exhortation, and soon became a local preacher. The work of revival followed him, and hundreds were converted through his instrumentality. In after years he was admitted into the Genesee Conference, and was a successful laborer to the close of his life. The work spread rapidly in all directions into Vermont, and at the West into the new settlements. In 1791 Philip Wager and Jonathan Newman were sent into the Otsego country to form a circuit, and they reported eighty members. This year Otsego County was formed, being taken from Montgomery. It was a wild country, the settlements few and far between; there were scarcely any roads, and the people were poor, wicked, and reckless. Jonathan Newman was just the man for the work assigned him. He became identified with Otsego Circuit, and his dust sleeps under its green turf. He was a mighty preacher, and was usually in the advance line of attack. He was the first Methodist preacher who visited many interesting points where Methodism now holds and has long held an enviable position. In 1792 two new circuits were formed, still further

at the north, on the St. Lawrence, called Cataraque and Oswegatchie. This year Jonathan Newman and James Covel were upon Otsego Circuit, and they extended their labors up the Mohawk Valley, and over the wild ridges and vales where originate the tributaries of the Susquehanna. About the same time Garrettson made a journey to the west as far as Whitestown, and prepared the way for the establishment of regular appointments, and for embracing that region within the bounds of a circuit on the Mohawk River."[10]

In 1789 he enlarged much the district, extending it westward to Schenectady. He continued to travel it till the end of our present period. He penetrated to the little Society which had so long been hidden in Ashgrove, and reanimated it by his powerful preaching. They had recently erected their small chapel. John Baker, an Irish emigrant, had arrived among them about two years before Garrettson's exploration of the upper Hudson, and had endeavored to procure them a preacher from the Conference, but none could be spared till Garrettson sent to them one of his own band, Lemuel Smith, who placed the Society under good regulation, and made it the headquarters of extensive evangelical labors for the surrounding country. "This Society," writes Garrettson's biographer, "may be considered the center of Methodism in this northern part of the country." A preacher who early traveled the circuit writes "that the Ashgrove Society was the hive of Methodism and its common center to all this part of the country for many years. The names of Ashton, Baker, Barber, Empy, Hannah, Nicholson, Fisher, and Armitage, will long be remembered in the history of Method-

[10] Rev. Dr. G. Peck's Early Methodism, etc., p. 174. New York. 1860.

ism in this place. Their hearts and their hands were open to sustain our ministers in the labors and toils of earlier days. Ashton, especially, was a great friend to the preachers. He had one room in his house fitted up with a bed, a table, and chairs, for the special accommodation of the preachers. This room was known far and near by the appellation of the 'Preachers' Room.' Here the preachers were at home as if the dwelling had been their own. In his last will he gave a building lot for a parsonage and a burying-ground. He also gave the furniture of the Preachers' Room and a cow for the benefit of the preachers who should be stationed on the circuit. He also left on his estate a perpetual annuity of ten dollars, to be paid to the oldest single elder of the New York Conference. The lot given by Ashton for a burying-ground, in Ashgrove, contains the remains of several of the early friends of Methodism."

Garrettson found not a few of the houses of the rich open for his entertainment on his long route. Gov. Van Courtlandt, near Croton River, especially became his ardent friend, and was long the hospitable protector of Methodist preachers.[11] Garrettson had now Asbury's famous driver "Black Harry" to accompany him. Harry preached continually with great success among both whites and blacks. At Hudson he says, "I found the people very curious to hear Harry. I therefore declined preaching, that their curiosity might be satisfied. The different denominations heard him with much admiration, and the Quakers thought that as he was unlearned he must preach by immediate inspiration." With Harry, he made a digression into New England as far as Boston, where we shall meet him, with Jesse Lee, hereafter.

[11] His daughter, Mrs. Van Wyck, was one of the most intelligent and zealous Methodists of these times.

In fine, Garrettson, in these three years' labor on the Hudson, opened nearly all its course for Methodism. He gathered into its Societies more than two thousand five hundred members. In 1791 he reported from it to the Conference twelve circuits. His district comprised nearly all the territory now included in the New York and Troy Conferences. "By this estimate," says his biographer, "those who now come among us may see what their fathers in the Gospel had to encounter, the immense labors they performed, and the consequent privations they must have endured, as well as the astonishing success which accompanied their exertions in the cause of their Master." At the Conference of 1791 the great field was divided into two districts, Garrettson taking charge of the northern one, which comprehended Dutchess, Columbia, New Britain, Cambridge, Albany, Saratoga, and Otsego Circuits. He continued to travel his new district till the General Conference of 1792, extending it into New England on the right, and into the new settlements on the left. He began (in 1791) the first Methodist chapel in Albany, and indeed in most of the principal communities of the Upper Hudson. Asbury repeatedly visited him, and rejoiced in the prosperity of his labors. In the latter part of July, 1791, Asbury held in Albany the first Conference[12] of these northern regions.

Garrettson and his fellow-laborers not only traveled and preached indefatigably, but suffered severe privations, and sometimes formidable opposition. In one instance, at least, his life was periled. "On looking back," he writes, "I see the hand of a good God in my preservation last Thursday. I came to Mr. —— weary and thirsty. I asked for something to drink, and my

[12] Bangs's Garrettson, p. 198. Asbury does not allude to the Conference. He was in Albany from the 29th of July to the 1st of August.

kind friend's wife went to fetch it. After staying about fifteen minutes, she returned with some small beer. As she advanced toward me I was as sensibly impressed as if some one had told me, That woman is not too good to put poison in the drink. As I was putting it to my lips the same impression was so strong, that immediately I refused, and put it down on the table untouched. Shortly after dinner was brought on the table, but I could eat very little. The next morning she poisoned her husband and two others with the meat which had been set before me. I was informed not long since that she had said she would put an end to the Methodists. A skillful physician was at hand, or in all probability they would have lost their lives. She was immediately sent to the jail in Albany."

Methodism not only reached westward as far as Utica, but south-westward into the Valley of Wyoming, which is recorded in the Minutes, as a circuit, as early as 1791. It entered that beautiful region, however, some three years before a preacher was sent thither. Its real founder there was Anning Owen, a blacksmith, a brave pioneer, who went to the valley, with a company of adventurers, soon after the Revolutionary War broke out. Owen was one of the few courageous men who were overthrown by the superior savage force of Col. John Butler, and barely escaped the bloody slaughter which followed. Returning to the East, his providential escape led him to devout reflection. His conscience was awakened, and he was not content till he found out the Methodists, under whose influence he became a renewed man. He went again to Wyoming, and began to converse with his neighbors on religion. Full of enthusiasm, and as tender-hearted as he was courageous, he hastened from house to house, exhorting with tears, reproving

vice, and seeking out all whose consciences were restless in sin. The historian of Methodism in that region, familiar with its earliest events, says, "He appointed prayer-meetings in his own house. The people were melted down under his prayers, his exhortations, and singing. He was invited to appoint meetings at other places in the neighborhood, and he listened to the call. A revival of religion broke out at Ross Hill, about a mile from his residence, and just across the line which separates the townships of Kingston and Plymouth. Great power attended the simple, earnest efforts of the blacksmith, and souls were converted to God. He studied the openings of Providence, and tried in all things to follow the divine light. He was regarded by the young converts as their spiritual father, and to him they looked for advice and comfort."[13] He became, practically, their pastor, and formed among them the first Methodist class of the valley in 1788. Benjamin Carpenter, Esq., was one of its members. With him Owen had frequent and anxious conversations on the necessity of providing preaching for the little flock. "They agreed," says our authority, "to settle the question by opening the Bible and following the lead of the first passage which presented itself. Squire Carpenter handed the Bible to Owen, and, upon opening it, the first sentence his eyes fell upon was, 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.' Squire Carpenter said, 'I cannot.' Owen said, 'I will.' The thing with him was settled, and he then began to meditate upon the measures necessary to carry into effect his resolution. He visited some point at the East, where Methodism had a local habitation and a name; and on returning, at a meeting of his Society, he said, 'I have received a regular license to preach, and

[13] Dr. Peck.

now have full power to proceed in the work.' Upon an examination of the old Minutes it will be seen that Wyoming was not recognized until three years after the organization of the first class. Upon being asked what they did for preaching all this time, one of the first members answered, 'Father Owen hammered away for us, and we did very well. We were all happy in God, and were not so very particular.'"

During these three years the young Society kept its altar fire burning without the aid of any other pastoral ministrations than those of the faithful blacksmith, and an occasional visit of Garrettson's preachers. "They set up," says one of them, "prayer-meetings and class-meetings, and the Lord poured out his Spirit upon us. Saints rejoiced and praised God, and sinners fell on the floor and cried for mercy, and few were able to keep their seats. These meetings were held on Sundays, Sunday evenings, and Thursday nights. This disturbed the enemy's camp and raised persecution against us, and our names were cast out as evil; but the more they persecuted us the more the Lord blessed us. The first minister that was sent among us was Mr. Mills." Nathaniel B. Mills traveled the Newburgh Circuit, on Garrettson's District, in 1789. In that year he reached the Wyoming Valley—the first Methodist preacher who entered it. In 1791 it was reported as a circuit, with James Campbell for its preacher. In the same year the Northumberland Circuit is recorded, but Methodism did not reach the valleys below till two years after its entrance into Wyoming. Richard Barrett had previously explored the Northumberland country, and now traversed it with Lewis Browning, forming classes and establishing "preaching places" in most of its settlements. They extended their labors till the Methodism of Northumberland met and

blended with that of Penn's Valley, where we have already witnessed the pioneer labors of Robert Pennington. Soon after the General Conferenceof 1792, William Colbert, then on the Northumberland Circuit, carried the Methodist standard into the Tioga country. Thus had the denomination commenced its march, from Garrettson's great battle-ground on the Hudson, toward what was then the north-western frontier. Stirring events are to attend it there, but they belong to a later part of our record. Anning Owen was the "apostle of Methodism in Wyoming Valley," and of its movements thence to the regions beyond. He joined the itinerant ranks a few years later, and labored successfully from Albany to the Chesapeake, from the Hudson far into the interior settlements of New York and Pennsylvania. He retired at last a worn-out veteran. His motto was, "Work! work! work! this world is no place for rest. His face was wrinkled, his head bald, and what of his hair remained was as white as snow. The Minutes say that Anning Owen labored faithfully and endured much hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and has been rendered a great blessing to many souls. He died in the sixty-third year of his age. He manifested great patience and resignation in the midst of his affliction: his confidence remained firm till his latest struggle. He was entirely willing to leave the world, and, without doubt, died in peace, and is now receiving the reward of his labors. Surely the last end of the good man is peace."

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO THE WEST.

Methodism crosses the Alleghanies — Jeremiah Lambert — Francis Poythress — Robert Wooster, a Local Preacher, first Introduces Methodism into the Valley of the Mississippi — John Jones the first Layman — Cooper and Breeze Itinerating in the Redstone Country — Traces of their Labors — Early Chapels — First Traveling Preacher raised up beyond the Mountains — The first Circuit — Asa Shinn — Outspread of the Church — The Holston Country — Lambert's Labors — Henry Willis and other Early Itinerants — Their Field — Their Trials — Thomas Ware's Mountain Adventures — Perils from Savages — First Conference beyond the Alleghanies — General Russell and his Family — William Burke — Outlines of the Field, 1789–1792 — Conversion of Felix Ernest — Van Pelt — Methodism enters Kentucky — Tucker killed by Indians — Early Local Preachers — James Haw and Benjamin Ogden the first Itinerants — The first Society — Subsequent Evangelists and their Success — Asbury beyond the Mountains — First Kentucky Conference — First Western Methodist School — Western Conferences — Asbury's Wayside Home.

We have already had several anticipatory glimpses of the advance of Methodism over the great Apalachian range. As early as 1783, Jeremiah Lambert is recorded in the Minutes as appointed to the Holston country—the first Methodist preacher designated to the ultramontane part of the continent.[1] We have seen Ware's eulogy on him as a man of "eminence in the pulpit," remarkable for his intelligence and amenity. Elsewhere he alludes to him as "the dovelike Lambert."[2]

But in the same year that Lambert is supposed to have penetrated the Holston region, Francis Poythress, then on the Alleghany Circuit, Pa., extended his travels across

[1] Quinn's Life, by Rev. J. F. Wright, p. 29. Cincinnati. 1851.

[2] Lambert was a native of New Jersey. Ware erroneously gives his Christian name as John.

the Alleghanies to the waters of the Little Youghiogeny.[3] The honor, however, of leading the march of Methodism into the great valley of the Mississippi belongs to the local ministry. Robert Wooster, a local preacher, labored in the Redstone country about the year 1781.[4] A venerable Methodist itinerant, resident in that section, three years later, and who witnessed the first Conference held there, at Uniontown, has left us a brief notice of this pioneer. Speaking of John Cooper and Solomon Breeze, who are first recorded in the Minutes for Redstone, (in 1784,) he says: "They made their entrance at Uniontown, in the immediate neighborhood of which were many Church people, and a few Methodists. But they had been preceded by Robert Wooster, a local preacher of piety and considerable talent. He had preached in many places, both in Fayette and Washington Counties. Souls had been awakened and converted to God by his preaching; but I am not sure that he formed any Societies. He came to one of my appointments in 1799, and preached for me a pure and powerful Gospel sermon. At that time his hair was as white as wool. I felt it a privilege to hear the first Methodist preacher, perhaps, whose voice was ever heard this side of the Alleghany Mountains. No doubt he is safe

[3] Finley's Sketches of Western Methodism, p. 133. Cincinnati. 1857.

[4] "Redstone was the name given by those living on the east of the mountains to all the country settled by the whites on the west of the mountains, though among the settlers themselves it was the name of an inconsiderable creek; but on it were the first settlements made. Uniontown, Fayette County, is near its head, and Brownsville near its mouth. The country itself, into which our missionaries entered, and which they occupied under the name of Redstone, was of considerable extent, embracing parts of the states of Pennsylvania and Virginia, and may be called the head of the great and fat valley. At that time Pennsylvania had four organized counties west of the mountains, Westmoreland, Fayette, Alleghany, and Washington; and Virginia had two, perhaps three, Monongalia, Harrison, and Ohio."—*Quinn's Life*, p. 31.

at home in paradise. He was an Englishman, and came to America about the time that Mr. Asbury did. He left the Redstone country early in the present century, settled in Bracken County, Ky., and removed from thence to Indiana, on White River, near Connersville, and died shouting."[5] It was under Wooster's preaching that John Jones, who went ten miles to hear him, became the first Methodist convert, of whom we have any record, beyond the mountains; he welcomed the preachers from the Alleghany Circuit, and was one of the first members of the first Society formed by them at Beesontown, now Uniontown. He gave a son to the itinerancy in the early part of our century.[6] Cooper and Breeze went to and fro in their new and extensive field, reaping the harvest of Wooster's labors —"following the openings of Providence, and wherever they found an open door there they entered," says Quinn, who followed them "over all the ground" fifteen years later, "while their footsteps remained to be seen, and their evangelical works were still found, in living epistles, all through the country." "The first Society," he continues, "was raised near Uniontown. I next found their steps on the Youghiogeny, near the Broad Ford;" he followed them down that river and discovered abiding traces of their labors at its forks in Westmoreland County. They passed thence over the Monongahela into Washington County, and, "directing their course up the river, raised the standard on Pike Run. In this place old Robert Wooster had labored with success. The fathers and mothers here have all gone, but I have seen and heard of their descendants, who still stand in the ranks of Methodism, still pressing forward in their happy toil." The missionaries found an open door, some five or six

[5] Quinn, p. 34.

[6] The Rev. Greenberry Jones, of the Ohio Conference.

miles from Brownsville, on the road to Washington. On the National Road, about five miles eastward from Brownsville, is a neat stone chapel, called Taylor's, on the spot where stood the log hut that some forty-five or fifty years since[7] was called Hochin's Meeting-house, (after one of the first Methodists,) and the second, if not the first, reared beyond the mountains. Near Washington the itinerants formed a Society, of which John Jones became a member, and thence they entered Washington. "Still in Washington," continues our authority, "we next find our missionaries on the waters of Cross Creek and Buffalo, kindly received by John and Philip Dodridge, and their old brother-in-law, Samuel Teeter. These all, with the greater part of their numerous families, fell into the ranks of Methodism; and Joseph, son of John Dodridge, became a traveling preacher—and the first raised up in the great valley—of considerable promise and success.[8] On the land of John Dodridge was built a little log meeting-house, which Dr. Joseph Dodridge insisted—the last conversation I had with him—was the first on this side of the mountains. The original Society here has had the place of its meeting transferred to Middletown, midway from Wellsburg or Steubenville to Washington; hence, going east on that road, a short distance before you reach Middletown, you leave on your right hand, within one mile, Dodridge's Meeting-house, and the sleeping dust of many of the first members of the Methodist Church in the head of the great valley. Before I leave this section, I must be

[7] Quinn wrote in 1839.

[8] "But he took orders, got a black gown and white band, and came out a parson. I have heard both Joseph and Dr. Joseph Dodridge preach, and, according to my recollection and judgment, I think Joseph could preach as well as the doctor, if not a little better. The difference was this: Joseph preached, and the doctor read."—*Quinn.*

permitted to say that the Dodridge and Teeter families, and the Society in their neighborhood—and I knew them well more than forty years ago—were a noble, free-hearted set of Christian people, who loved one another, and served God with humility of mind. We still have scores, yea, hundreds of their descendants within the pale of Methodism. I am not sure that Cooper and Breeze ever got out any further toward the Ohio River; but if they did, it does not appear that they made any permanent stand. In those days there were perilous times; Indian depredations were quite common. Next I find these devoted servants of Christ raising the flag on Muddy Creek, where a Society was formed, and a meeting-house built, called Shepherd's Meeting-house. It was a small log building. Methodism still lives in that place, although those who first were brought under its influence, having served their generation, by the will of God, have fallen asleep. Thence I follow them up the Monongahela to Whiteley and Dunkard Creeks. Here I found a good Society in 1799, and I am told that God still has a people in that place. They also raised a Society on Crooked Creek, eight or ten miles from Morgantown, Va. In Morgantown they had not much fruit of their labor; but in 1799 I found there a meeting-house and a small Society. I know not that Cooper and his colleague went any further up the waters of the Monongahela, but turning their faces toward Uniontown, near the mouth of Cheat River, they found the Parishes. These were men of sterling worth. Here a good class was formed, and a meeting-house built, called Martin's Church, and Methodism has had a permanent standing there ever since its first introduction. They now enter again into old Fayette, and bearing down the Monongahela River toward Brownsville, they establish a

preaching-place at a Mr. Roberts's, nearly opposite the mouth of Muddy Creek, two or three miles from the river. Here also a Society was raised, and a meeting-house built, called Roberts's Meeting-house. There was a good Society here in 1803, and in that year they had an accession to the Church, and built a new chapel. James, the eldest son of old Mr. Roberts, became a traveling preacher at an early day, but soon married and retired from the work, yet sustained the relation of a local preacher, and maintained the Christian character till a few years since, when, near the town of Cadiz, Harrison County, O., he closed his eyes in death. I have followed these indefatigable men round their circuit, embracing parts of five counties, four in Pennsylvania and one in Virginia, and have come to the place of beginning, old Uniontown. Here is the place where, by the instrumentality of Wooster, Cooper, and Breeze, the handful of corn was placed in the head of the great valley, the fruit of which has been shaking, like Lebanon, for more than half a century. I next proceed to take some notice of the extension of the work by those who came after. In 1785 Peter Moriarty, John Fidler, and Wilson Lee were appointed to Redstone. Moriarty was the first man I ever heard preach; I was then a lad in my eleventh year. His text was Hebrews xii, 1. Under that sermon I concluded myself a sinner, and that anger was the sin that most easily beset me. Whether this was a correct conclusion or not, I have been profited greatly by it through life thus far. These men were greatly beloved by the people, and very useful among them; and the first generation of Methodists in that region of country loved, and thought, and talked about their endeared Cooper, Breeze, Moriarty, Lee, etc., as long as they lived. Blessed preachers! blessed people! they are now in par-

adise, and will be forever each other's joy and crown. Moriarty and his colleagues not only nursed the Societies that had been raised by their predecessors, while they were enlarged under their ministry, but they also extended and enlarged their field of labor, including all or most of the settlements between Washington County and the Ohio River, and embracing that part of Virginia included in the counties of Brook and Ohio, and extending on the Ohio River from Wheeling, some twenty-five or thirty miles up, to or above a place called Holliday's Cove. At the close of 1785 the number of members from this field was five hundred and twenty-three, so that it appears they labored not in vain in the Lord. The next year, William Phœbus, John Wilson, and E. Phelps being appointed to Redstone, enlarged the circuit, passing up the several branches of the Monongahela above Morgantown, Va., namely, West Fork, Buckhannon, Tygart's Valley, and Cheat River, as far as settlements had been made by the whites. On the West Fork, some twenty miles above Morgantown, a Society was formed in the neighborhood, perhaps in the house of old Calder Haymond. This man, his three sons and several daughters, with their families and others, constituted a large and flourishing class. Some fifteen or twenty miles further up, toward Clarksburgh, a door was opened, and a good Society formed, at the house of Mr. J. Shinn, father of Rev. Asa Shinn. This man was of Quaker origin, but he believed and was baptized and his household. Forty years have passed away since I preached and met the class in this good man's house. At that time Asa was seeking salvation with a broken spirit—a broken and a contrite heart; we prayed together in the woods, and I have loved him ever since. This young man was admitted on trial in 1801, although he had never seen a

meeting-house or a pulpit before he left his father's house to become a traveling preacher. He had only a plain English education, yet in 1809 we find him, by the appointment of the venerable Asbury, in the Monumental City, as colleague of another backwoods youth, R. R. Roberts, afterward Bishop Roberts. Methodism could obtain no footing in Clarksburg for many years—not so now; but some eight or ten miles still further up the West Fork a door was opened, and a blessed work ensued. Many souls were born of God. The patriarch in the membership here was old Moses Ellsworth, of German descent. He was great-grandfather to our Ellsworths of the Ohio Conference. In this vicinity lived and labored, and died in holy triumph, Joseph Chieuvrant, a Frenchman by birth. He was converted from Catholicism, and converted to God, about the commencement of the Revolution, and had permission to exhort. He was called out by draft as a militia-man in the army; he became acquainted with and was instrumental in the conversion of Lasley Matthews, an Irish Catholic. These men were mighty in the Scriptures; they preached and loved, and lived holy. Chieuvrant was one of the most extensively useful local preachers I ever knew. Still on the West Fork, ascending, a Society was raised at an early date. Some of these people journeyed to the West, and settled in Champaign County, Ohio, where some of their posterity are still in the ranks of Methodism. We now take a left-hand fork, called Hacker's Creek, and find a living, loving, large Society at old Father Hacker's. His numerous family were chiefly members, and his son William a local preacher, and another a class-leader. Thence we cross over a mountain, or very high hill, on to the head of Buckhannon, another branch of the Monongahela. Here I found a very good Society, which had been formed by

the first preachers. From Regers's settlement, on Buckhannon, we cross the high or mountainous lands to the swamps in Tygart's Valley. Here was a Society forty years ago, which had been raised by the pioneers of Methodism some eight or ten years prior to that period. The principal members were two brothers by the name of Thomas, sons of an old Methodist traveling preacher, who used to labor successfully on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia in the early days of Methodism. Having taken this little excursion of a hundred and fifty miles or more through the hills or mountains of Virginia, and visited all or most of the Societies which had been organized some years previous to the close of the eighteenth century, I returned to old Uniontown, the place of beginning, passing down Tygart's Valley to the mouth, and so on through Morgantown. I found in this range some large settlements, where there was no Methodist preaching or a Society, although attempts had been made in all. Thus Methodism, for a time, at least, was kept out of these strongholds. But it has had an entrance. After the lapse of forty years I have found the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who at that time were its determined enemies, among its warmest friends and most zealous supporters and defenders." In 1787 the number in Society in Redstone was seven hundred and fifty-six. From Uniontown, which was then the center of Methodism in the head of the great valley, the preachers continued to enlarge the field of labor on every side, and to every place where the Macedonian cry was heard. In 1788 the Redstone field seems to have been divided into four circuits: Clarksburg, Ohio, Pittsburg, and Redstone. Seven preachers were appointed to it. "I knew them all," says Quinn; "they were

considered pious men, and useful in their day, and some of them of very acceptable preaching talents." Jacob Lurton and Lasley Matthews stand for Redstone proper, and it was for them to enlarge the field to the east, and carry the Gospel to the sparse settlements interspersed through the mountains. They entered the range fifteen miles south of Uniontown, and passing up a creek, made their way to Sandy Creek Glades. Here in a large settlement they preached, and raised a strong Society, "which was a good, loving people forty years ago, and met at the house of old William Waller." Thence they pushed on over all the neighboring country. Crossing the Laurel Hill, they made their way into the head of Ligonier Valley. Near old Fort Ligonier was raised a large and flourishing Society. Here the father of the venerable Bishop Roberts and his extensive family joined the ranks of Methodism. The itinerants rallied many local preachers to their work, but a few noted traveling preachers were also raised up, and before the century closed all the Redstone country was pervaded with Methodism. It was the frontier field from which the denomination took its march at last over all the great northwestern territories.

As the Holston region was the field whence it marched into the middle-western and south-western states, let us now return to its labors and struggles in the Holston Mountains.

The "Holston country" was about the head-waters of the south fork of the Holston River, which extended as far east as Wythe and the borders of Grayson counties, and as far west as the Three Islands. It was in these rugged but sublime heights that the itinerants began their movement westward into Tennessee. At the Conference which appointed Lambert, sixty church-members

were reported. By whom had they been gathered? and by whom were the returns made? I cannot answer these questions, but conjecture that as early as 1777, when King, Dickins, and Cole labored in North Carolina, if not indeed in the preceding year, when Poythress, Dromgoole, and Tatum preached there, their travels were extended into these mountains. Lambert's Circuit comprised all the settlements on the Wautauga, Nolachucky, and Holston Rivers, including what are now Green, Washington, Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, and Hawkins's Counties in Tennessee, and Washington, Smyth, Russell, and perhaps Lee and Scott Counties, in Virginia; "a large circuit; but he made his way as best he could in the name and for the sake of Him who had said, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;' and at the next Conference, or in April, 1784, he returned seventy-six members, or sixteen more than he had received."[9]

Henry Willis, whom we have lately left in Charleston, S. C., traversed these mountains in 1784,[10] a man of whom Thomas Ware says that "he stood pre-eminent. I knew him well. He was a manly genius, and very intelligent. He well understood theology, and was a most excellent minister. His life, as a traveling and local preacher and a supernumerary, was, I believe, unblemished. I followed him to the south as far as North Carolina, to the east as far as New York, and to the west as far as Holston, and found his name dear to many of the excellent of the earth. His physical powers, however, were not sufficient to sustain the ardor of his mind. But of this he was often wholly unmindful, until his bow nearly lost its elasticity, when a local or supernumerary relation became

[9] Religious Intelligencer, Morristown, Tenn. 1858.

[10] Finley, p. 57, is incorrect. See Minutes of 1783 and 1784.

inevitable." The cotemporary records of Methodism incessantly mention this able and useful Itinerant.

Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert, Mark Moore and Mark Whitaker, John Tunnel, Jeremiah Maston, Nathaniel Moore, Edward Morris, Joseph Dodridge, Philip Bruce, Thomas Ware, John M'Gee, William Burke, and others, followed, pressing further westward, before the close of our present period. An evangelist of those times, who well knew the country and its adventurous preachers, informs us that they were under the care of an elder whose district included Salisbury and Yadkin Circuits in North Carolina, and Holston in the west. In 1787 the Holston Circuit was divided into two circuits, Holston and Nolachucky, and Philip Bruce was appointed elder. Two new preachers, Jeremiah Maston and Thomas Ware, were sent in 1788, when two new circuits were made out of the old ones: the Holston Circuit, embracing all the settlements on the East and North Forks of Holston, and all the settlements on the Clinch River, including the counties of Washington and Russell in Virginia, and Blount County in "the Western territory;" and French Broad, including all the settlements west and south of the main Holston to the frontiers bordering on the Cherokee nation. The same authority, speaking[11] of Swift and Gilbert, who traveled among these mountains in 1785, says that the country at this time was new and thinly settled; that they met with many privations and sufferings, and made but little progress; that the most of the region through which they traveled was very mountainous and rough, and the greater part a frontier exposed to Indian depredations. They were followed by Mark Whitaker and Mark Moore,

[11] Rev. William Burke, in Finley's Sketches of Western Methodism. p. 28.

"who were zealous, plain, old-fashioned Methodist preachers," and were instrumental in raising up many Societies. Mark Whitaker in particular was a strong man. He laid a good foundation for his successors, and was followed by Jeremiah Maston, Thomas Ware, and others. These men planted the standard of the cross in the frontier settlements of the French Broad, and numerous Societies were raised up, so that in 1791 they numbered upward of one thousand members. About this time William Burke arrived in the Holston country; he says the pioneers of Methodism in that part of Western Virginia and the Western territory suffered many privations, and underwent much toil and labor, preaching in forts and cabins, sleeping on straw, bear and buffalo skins, living on bear meat, venison, and wild turkeys, traveling over mountains and through solitary valleys, and sometimes lying on the cold ground; receiving but a scanty support, "barely enough to keep soul and body together, with coarse home-made apparel;" but "the best of all was their labors were owned and blessed of God, and they were like a band of brothers, having one purpose and end in view—the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. When the preachers met from their different and distant fields of labor they had a feast of love and friendship; and when they parted, they wept and embraced each other as brothers beloved. Such was the spirit of primitive Methodist preachers."

Ware's departure, in 1787, to this distant section, at the call of his friend Tunnell, has already been recorded He found, he says, the population of his circuit spread over a region equal in extent to East Jersey, almost wholly destitute of the Gospel. "Many were refugees from justice. Some there were who had borrowed money, or were otherwise in debt, and had left

their creditors and securities to do the best they could; some had been guilty of heinous or scandalous crimes, and had fled from justice; others had left their wives, and were living with other women. Among these there were a few who had made a profession of religion, and two in particular, who had been ministers of the Gospel and who opposed the Methodists violently. But, notwithstanding the opposition we had to contend with from these and other causes, God prospered us in our work. In many of the settlements we found some who had heard the Methodists preach, and they hailed us with a hearty welcome. Societies were formed, and a number of log-chapels erected, and on the circuit three hundred members were received this year." In the fall of the year Tunnell, the presiding elder, received letters from persons low down the Holston and French Broad, deploring their entire destitution of the Gospel, and entreating him, if possible, to send them a preacher. These letters he read at the Quarterly Meeting Conferences, and it was agreed that Ware should attempt to form a circuit in those parts. "There were many things," he says, "which rendered itinerating in that section of the country at the time I went peculiarly painful to a person like myself. I have always considered this a season of the most severe sufferings I have passed through in an itinerant life of more than forty years." Sometimes the cold, for a few days, is intense there. At these times, especially when he had to ford rivers and creeks at the risk of life, as he often did, and to lodge in open log-cabins, with light bed-clothing, and frequently with several children in his bed, he was much exposed to sickness; and "traveling there, on these accounts, was rendered exceedingly crossing to nature." But, in addition to these sufferings, much of the time his path was

infested with savages, the deadly foes of white men, who had but too justly incurred their resentment; and more subtle and terrible enemies, could not be imagined than were the native red men, incensed at the wrongs inflicted upon them by the whites. Many individuals and families had been murdered by them in places directly on his routes, and once, at least, he narrowly escaped being killed or taken prisoner. "My course," he says, "led through a fine bottom, covered chiefly with the crab-apple tree. I passed along very slowly, making observations upon the richness and beauty of the country, and had thoughts of halting to muse a little in the grove;" but, recollecting at the moment that he had heard a rumor about hostile Indians in that vicinity, he concluded not to pause, but rather mend his pace. He had now approached a lofty grove, when suddenly his horse stopped, snorted, and wheeled about. "As he wheeled I caught," he says, "a glimpse of an Indian, but at too great a distance to reach me with his rifle. I gave my horse the reins, and hastened to the nearest settlement to give the alarm. I had been told that some horses were singularly afraid of an Indian. Be that as it may, I have reason to suppose that the sudden fright which mine took at seeing one was the means, under God, of saving me from death or captivity."

The Indians sometimes dashed into the settlements while the people were assembled in a cabin or barn to hear the preachers. "I was preaching," says Ware, "at the house of a man who had invited us by letter to visit their settlement, when we were alarmed with the cry of 'Indians!' The terror this cry excited at that time none can imagine, except those who witnessed it. Instantly every man flew to his rifle, and sallied forth to ascertain the ground of the alarm. On coming out we saw two

lads running with all speed, and screaming, 'The Indians have killed mother!' We followed them about a quarter of a mile, and witnessed the affecting scene of a woman weltering in her blood. The savages were concealed in the canebrake, and, coming up slily behind a fallen tree, so as not to be discovered by her, they drove the tomahawk into her head before she knew they were near. The Indian who did the bloody deed was seen by the boys just as he struck their mother; but they were at a sufficient distance to make their escape." The event was not without good results. Ware preached her funeral sermon, and warned her neighbors of the peril of their souls, for they were a demoralized class, and hitherto seemed unimpressed by his admonitions. They now gathered with tears around him, and entreated him to return again. At the next time he arrived there ten or twelve "united with purpose of heart to seek the Lord."

From this settlement he went down to the lowest on the Holston. He found the people assembled in several places in great alarm, devising means of defense against the enemy, from whom they expected no mercy. Many seemed struck with astonishment that he should hazard his life to visit them at such a time. They were full of kindness, heard with interest, and guarded him from place to place. From this section he crossed over to French Broad River. "This journey," he says, "was dreary enough. No regular road, and for much of the way not a vestige of one to be seen, except the marked trees leading to the lower settlements on the French Broad, in the vicinity of the Cherokees. Nor was there a cabin to be seen. I was sometimes roused from my monotonous revery by flocks of deer, wild turkeys, or an affrighted bear dashing through the underbrush. Among the white children of the forest, inhabiting the region I

visited, there were some Methodists who had come from distant parts and brought their religion with them. These hailed me as a welcome messenger; and leading the way, many followed them in the service of the Lord. So in a short time we had a flourishing Society, and there were men capable of taking a part in conducting its operations."

He was attacked by mobs, and barely escaped with his life. Sick and weary, pursuing his route by marks on the trees, he was lost in the forest, wandering bewildered most of the night. He sometimes slept on the ground under the trees. His trials were as severe as perhaps were ever endured by an American pioneer preacher.

The first Methodist Conference beyond the Alleghanies is usually supposed to have been held at Uniontown, Pa., on the 22d of July, 1788; but a session was held, as we have seen, at Half Acres, Tenn., as early as the second week of the previous May.[12] We have followed Asbury in his adventurous journey thither. Ware gives some further information of the memorable occasion. "As the road by which Bishop Asbury was to come was," he says, "infested with hostile savages, so that it could not be traveled except by considerable companies, he was detained for a week after the time appointed to commence it. But we were not idle; and the Lord gave us many souls in the place where we were assembled, among whom were General Russell and lady, the latter a sister of the illustrious Patrick Henry. I mention these particularly, because

[12] Compare Ware (p. 151) and Asbury (ii, 33.) Quinn (Life, p. 51) says the Uniontown Conference was held in 1787—evidently an error. Compare Minutes, 1786–87, with Asbury. I know no reason to doubt, however, that the first ordination in the valley of the Mississippi was at Uniontown, as usually supposed.

they were the first-fruits of our labors at this Conference. On the Sabbath we had a crowded audience, and Tunnell preached an excellent sermon, which produced great effect. His discourse was followed by a number of powerful exhortations. When the meeting closed, Mrs. Russell came to me and said: 'I thought I was a Christian; but, sir, I am not a Christian—I am the veriest sinner upon earth. I want you and Mr. Maston to come with Mr. Tunnell to our house and pray for us, and tell us what we must do to be saved.' So we went, and spent much of the afternoon in prayer, especially for Mr. Russell. But she did not obtain comfort. Being much exhausted, the preachers retired to a pleasant grove, near at hand, to spend a short time. On returning to the house we found Mrs. Russell praising the Lord, and the general walking the floor and weeping bitterly. At length he sat down, quite exhausted. This scene was in a high degree interesting to us. To see the old soldier and statesman, the proud opposer of godliness, trembling, and earnestly inquiring what he must do to be saved, was an affecting sight. But the work ended not here. The conversion of Mrs. Russell, whose zeal, good sense, and amiableness of character were proverbial, together with the penitential grief so conspicuous in the general, made a deep impression on the minds of many, and numbers were brought in before the Conference closed. The general rested not until he knew his adoption; and he continued a faithful and an official member of the Church, constantly adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour unto the end of his life." No name is recorded, in the biographies of the pioneer itinerants among these mountains, with more grateful affection than that of General Russell. His house was long their asylum, and Asbury always entered it with delight.

The appointments of this Conference for the Holston country were Edward Morris, Elder; Holston, Jeremiah Maston, Joseph Dodridge; French Broad, Daniel Asbury; East New River, Thomas Ware, Jesse Richardson. Ware says that he and his colleague were instructed "to enlarge our borders from a two to a four weeks' circuit. This we did with great ease. There was not within the bounds of our circuit a religious meeting except those held by us. The hearts and houses of the people were open to receive us, so that we hesitated not to call at any dwelling which might first come in our way when we wanted refreshment. Here had been a goodly number gathered in the preceding year. These needed to be nursed with care. Of these we lost, by death, removal, and otherwise, during the year, twenty; and we received eighty into the Church." During the ensuing winter he endured fearful exposures among the mountain storms, the effects of which, on his health, he bore with him to the grave; but he says of the two years he spent in these regions, "I passed them very pleasantly to myself, and so it would have been in Greenland itself, with the sentiments and feelings I possessed."

A succession of energetic men were rapidly dispatched to this new field, and thence to the further West. William Burke, a Virginian, was one of the mightiest among them. He was converted under the preaching of Isaac Lowe, in North Carolina, in 1790, when twenty years old. Lowe soon called him out upon a circuit. In 1791 he was sent to the Holston Mountains. He has left us a rapid sketch of the ecclesiastical field there. "In 1789," he says, "John Tunnell was presiding elder, and Bottetourt Circuit added. In 1790 two districts were formed; one was composed of West New River, Russell, Holston, and Green Circuits—Charles Hardy, presiding

elder This year John M'Gee and John West were on Green Circuit. Bottetourt, Greenbrier, and Kanawha Circuits made the other district—Jeremiah Able, presid ing elder. This year the Little Kanawha Circuit was formed, and Jacob Lurton was the preacher in charge. He was an original genius, and a useful preacher. In 1791 Mark Whitaker was presiding elder, and Charles Hardy and John West were on the West New River Circuit. Charles Hardy located this year, and the latter part of the year I succeeded him. John West remained with me on the circuit till the Holston Conference, on the 15th of May, 1792. Mr. Asbury, on his return from the Kentucky Conference, met the Conference at Huffaker's, Rich Valley of Holston, on the 15th of April, 1792. Hope Hull, who had accompanied him from Georgia, and Wilson Lee, who was now returning from Kentucky to the East, were with him. Both preached at this Conference with great success. General William Russell, who had married the widow of General Campbell, and sister of Patrick Henry, and had embraced religion, together with his amiable lady, and who lived at the salt-works, on the North Fork of Holston, attended this session, and accommodated a number of the preachers. Upon the whole, we had a good time for those days. Stephen Brooks, from the Kentucky Conference, was appointed to Green Circuit, in charge, and I was appointed with him; and Barnabas M'Henry, who came also with the bishop from Kentucky, was the presiding elder. We had an entire set of new preachers for the whole district: Salathiel Weeks and James Ward on the Holston Circuit, both from Virginia; David Haggard, Daniel Lockett, and Jeremiah Norman, from North Carolina. Norman was on Russell, and Haggard and Lockett on

West New River. The presiding elder and all the preachers entered into a covenant to attend strictly to the Discipline. When Brooks and myself arrived at our charge, which was in a few days after the Conference, we mutually agreed to enforce the rules of the Society, and by midsummer we had the satisfaction of seeing a gracious work in many places on the circuit." Burke had the usual perils and hardships of his ministerial brethren in these mountains, but saw many of the worst opposers reformed, and Churches founded in many settlements. "On Nolachucky there was," he says, "a rich and thickly-settled community, which afterward bore the name of Ernest's neighborhood. It had but one Methodist, the wife of Felix Ernest, who attended preaching when she could, being about five or six miles distant from the appointment. Ernest was a very wicked man, and a drunkard. Being one day at a distillery, the Spirit of God arrested him. He immediately went home, and inquired of his wife if she knew of any Methodist meeting anywhere on that day. It happened to be the day that Brooks preached in an adjoining neighborhood, and Ernest immediately put off for the meeting. He arrived there after it had begun, and stood in the door, with his shirt-collar open, his face red, and the tears streaming down his cheeks. He invited Brooks to preach in his neighborhood. He consented, and in two weeks Brooks came round and found a good congregation. 'The word of God,' he says, 'had free course, and was glorified.' The whole family of the Ernests was brought into the Church, with many others, and by the first of September we had a large Society formed. I left the circuit in September, but the work continued. In a short time they built a meeting-house, and Ernest became a local preacher."

Local preachers were, here as elsewhere, important auxiliaries to the few itinerants: Morgan on West New River; "Father Regen" in "Rich Valley," a man much respected and useful in his neighborhood; Stilwell, a successful laborer on "Fish Creek, Green County, Western Territory;" but particularly Benjamin Van Pelt, brother of Asbury's friend on Staten Island, also in Green County, where Van Pelt's Chapel was long a headquarters of Methodism on the frontier. Asbury rejoiced to greet him again in these distant wilds, and to preach in his humble church. Not a few itinerants were also raised up among these mountain Societies: Francis Acuff, "of precious memory," who fell at his post, a pioneer of the Church in Kentucky; David Young, long a Western veteran; Hanager, Massie, Porter, and others, "whose labors and usefulness are known among the thousands of Israel; and the few who remain to witness the spread and triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom are ready to exclaim, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'"

Meanwhile the itinerant heralds had entered Kentucky. It was only about ten years before the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church that Colonel Daniel Boone penetrated this wilderness, and that the first emigrant families settled there. The luxuriant country invited immigration, and adventurers poured into its beautiful valleys. As early as 1784 Methodist local preachers began to enter it, both as settlers and as pioneers of their faith. In this year one of them, by the name of Tucker, while descending the Ohio in a boat with a number of his kindred, men, women, and children, was fired upon by Indians; a battle ensued; the preacher was mortally wounded; but, falling upon his knees, prayed and fought till, by his self-pos-

session and courage, the boat was rescued. He then immediately expired, "shouting the praise of the Lord."[13] Not long after the Revolutionary War, Francis Clark, a local preacher from Virginia, settled in the neighborhood of Danville, Mercer County, and was among the first Methodists that emigrated to the country. He was a man of sound judgment, and well instructed in the doctrines of Methodism. As a preacher he was successful in forming Societies, and lived many years to rejoice in the cause that he had been the instrument, under God, of commencing in the wilderness. He died at his own domicile, in the fall of 1799, in great peace. William J. Thompson emigrated at an early day from Stokes County, North Carolina, and settled in the same neighborhood. He became also a useful laborer, preaching with acceptance and success. He afterward joined the traveling connection in the Western Conference, and when he moved to the State of Ohio became connected with the Ohio Conference, where his labors and usefulness are held in remembrance by many. The next local preachers that entered Kentucky were Nathaniel Harris, from Virginia, and Gabriel and Daniel Woodfield, from the Redstone country. Harris settled in Jessamine County, and the Woodfields in Fayette County; and not long after Philip Taylor, from Virginia, located in Jessamine County. These were considered a great acquisition to the infant Societies. Nathaniel Harris and Gabriel Woodfield were among the first order of local preachers; they entered the itinerancy. Gabriel Woodfield afterward settled in Henry County,

[13] Theophilus Armenius (Rev. Dr. Hind) in Methodist Magazine, 1819, p. 184. "I am personally acquainted," says this writer, "with another local preacher, who about this time was fired on while descending the same river, and had one arm shattered by a ball from the guns of the same enemy."

but removed to Indiana, in the neighborhood of Madison, where he lived to a good old age, and died in peace among his friends and connections. Joseph Ferguson, a local preacher from Fairfax County, Virginia, moved to Kentucky at an early time, settled in Nelson County, and was among the first preachers in that section of the country. He was an amiable man, possessed good preaching talents, and was very useful, highly esteemed, and blessed with an excellent family; his house became a home for the traveling preachers, who were at all times welcome guests. He lived to a good old age, at the place where he first settled, and died in the triumphs of the Gospel. Ferguson's meeting-house was one of the first that was built in that part of the country.[14]

In 1786 the itinerants reached Kentucky. James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were the first that appeared there.[15] Ogden was born in New Jersey, in 1764. He served in the Revolutionary army, and had no little influence among his fellow-soldiers, many of whom he found afterward in his western travels. Kentucky was then a hunting-ground for Indian tribes, and the home of a few daring pioneers from Virginia and Maryland, whose lives were in continual jeopardy from savage foes, on which account they dwelt in communities within strongly-defended forts called "stations." Among these pioneers

[14] Finley's Sketches, p. 62.

[15] These two pioneers have met with a hard fate in our vague accounts of those early times. Bangs (i, 253) says "they soon after departed from the work, being seduced by James O'Kelly and his party." Bangs's authority was Dr. Hind, who says (Meth. Mag., 1819, p. 136) that they not only seceded, but "both went to nothing;" one long since dead, the other "a poor backslider." I qualify these statements by the authority of J. W. Gunn, of Kentucky. Burke, in Finley, is also one of my best authorities. There is some truth in these imputations, but it is too deeply colored, as my narrative shows.

was Thomas Stevenson, whose wife was one of Strawbridge's converts. Both were members of the Church, and to their humble cabin at "Kenton's Station" the missionary received a cordial welcome, and there found a home; in their house the first Methodist Church in Kentucky was organized, and there for more than a quarter of a century the Gospel was proclaimed by the fathers of the ministry.[16] In 1788 Ogden located on account of his worn-out health. It is said that he subsequently sympathized with the O'Kelly schism,[17] left the Church, and even fell into open vices; but the Minutes record no such charges. At a later day he reappeared in the itinerancy, and died a member of the Conference in 1834. His brethren commemorate him as "a man of good native intellect, and various attainments as a Christian minister, and especially well instructed, and deeply imbued with the principles and spirit of his vocation, as a primitive Methodist preacher. After a long life of laborious toil and effective service in the furtherance of the Gospel, this venerable servant of God and his Church, one of the first missionaries who penetrated the vast valley of the Mississippi, was released by death from his militant charge, and expiring in all the calmness and confidence of faith and hope, went to his reward."[18]

James Haw joined the itinerant ministry in 1781, and continued to travel till 1791, when, like most of his itinerant cotemporaries, he located. "He was," says one who knew him well, "the first traveling Methodist preacher that entered on the field in Kentucky in 1786. He was an able and successful laborer in the Lord's vineyard. Numerous were the sufferings and hardships

[16] St. Louis Christian Advocate, 1859. The Rev. Dr. Stevenson was a son of this family.

[17] Finley's Sketches, p. 48. Cartwright's Autobiography, p. 40

[18] Minutes of 1836.

that he underwent in planting the standard of the cross in that wild and uncultivated region, surrounded with savages, and traveling from fort to fort, and every day exposing his life; but, notwithstanding every difficulty and embarrassment, the good work progressed. In the years 1787, 1788, and 1789, the holy flame spread all over Kentucky and Cumberland. Haw, Poythress, Wilson Lee, and Williamson, were the chief instruments in carrying on this great work." Haw was a man of ardent soul. We have noticed his letter, reported by Coke, to a Southern Conference, calling for martyrs for the Indian regions of Kentucky. A letter written by him to Asbury, in the beginning of the year 1789, says: "Good news from Zion; the work of God is going on rapidly in this new world; a glorious victory the Son of God has gained, and he is still going on conquering and to conquer. Heaven rejoices daily over sinners that repent. At a Quarterly Meeting held in Bourbon County, Kentucky, July 19th and 20th, 1788, the Lord poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner, first on the Christians, and sanctified several of them powerfully and gloriously, and, as I charitably hope, wholly. The seekers also felt the power and presence of God, and cried for mercy as at the point of death. We prayed with and for them, till we had reason to believe that the Lord converted seventeen or eighteen precious souls. Halleluiah, praise ye the Lord! As I went from that through the circuit to another Quarterly Meeting, the Lord converted two or three more. The Saturday and Sunday following the Lord poured out his Spirit again. The work of sanctification among the believers broke out at the Lord's table, and the Spirit went through the assembly like a mighty rushing wind. Some fell; many cried for mercy. Tears of sorrow for sin ran streaming down their eyes.

Their prayers reached to heaven, and the Spirit of the Lord entered into them and filled fourteen or fifteen with peace and joy in believing. A few days after Brother Poythress came, and went with me to another Quarterly Meeting. We had another gracious season round the Lord's table, but no remarkable stir till after preaching; when under several exhortations some broke out into tears, others trembled, and some fell. The first round I went on Cumberland the Lord converted six precious souls; and every round I have reason to believe some sinners are awakened, some seekers joined to Society, and some penitents converted to God. At our Cumberland Quarterly Meeting the Lord converted six souls the first day, and one the next. The work still goes on. The Lord has converted several more precious souls in various parts of the circuit, and some more have joined the Society, so that we have one hundred and twelve disciples now in Cumberland, forty-seven of whom I trust have received the gift of the Holy Ghost since they believed, and I hope these are but the first of a universal harvest which God will give us in this country. Brother Massie is with me, going on weeping over sinners, and the Lord blesses his labors. A letter from Brother Williamson, dated November 10th, 1788, informs me that the work is still going on rapidly in Kentucky. Indeed, the wilderness and solitary places are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose, and, I trust, will soon become beautiful as Tirza and comely as Jerusalem. What shall I more say? Time would fail to tell you all the Lord's doings among us. It is marvelous in our eyes."

These two standard-bearers were soon reinforced. In 1787 Wilson Lee and Thomas Williamson joined them. In 1788 they had three circuits, Lexington, Danville, and

Cumberland, and Peter Massie, Benjamin Snelling, David Coombs, Barnabas M'Henry, and Poythress, were added to the little ministerial corps. Haw and Poythress had charge of them as elders. They reported 539 members. The next year Stephen Brooks and Joshua Hartley came to their help, and 1,088 members were reported. In 1790 Samuel Tucker, Joseph Lillard, Henry Burchet, and David Haggard were the ministerial recruits, and the membership numbered 1,366. In 1791 they reported 1,969 members, and Joseph Tatman and James O'Cull were added to the itinerant band. In the last year of our present period (1792) they had four circuits, their membership had risen to 2,235, and John Ray, John Sewell, Benjamin Northcott, John Page, Richard Bird, John Ball, Jonathan Stephenson, and Isaac Hammer, were their reinforcement.[19] Of some of these itinerants we shall have occasion to speak more fully hereafter. William Burke, one of their early successors, gives us notices of a few of them. Of M'Henry, he says that he was one of the early fruits of Methodism in the Holston country. "He penetrated the wilderness, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The band of young, resolute soldiers of the cross united under two old and experienced veterans, Francis Poythress and James Haw. Providence opened their way; they occupied the whole ground, and, with the assistance of the few local men who had been there before them, they carried the war into the camp of the enemy, and in a short time a powerful and extensive revival took place. Hundreds were added to the Church, and, considering the situation of the country, a wilderness, the Indians continually making depredations on the frontiers, and

[19] These particulars do not all correspond with the Minutes, but I prefer the authority of Burke, in Finley's Sketches, p. 65.

the people constantly harassed and penned up in forts and stations, it may be considered among the greatest revivals that was ever known. In this revival a number of wealthy and respectable citizens were added to the Church: the Hardins, Thomases, Hites, Lewises, Easlands, Mastersons, Kavanaughs, Tuckers, Richardsons, Letemors, Browns, Garretts, Churchfields, Jefferses, Hoards, and numbers of others of respectable standing in society; and out of this revival was raised up some useful and promising young men, who entered the traveling connection, and many made full proof of their ministry, and lived many years to ornament the Church of God. Peter Massie, who was termed the weeping prophet, was among the first-fruits. He was an instrument of great good wherever he went. He literally wore himself out in a few years. He was mighty in prayer, and always wished that he might die suddenly, and without lingering in pain." He labored faithfully for three years, and on the 18th of December, 1791, while sitting in his chair, at a "station" six miles south of Nashville, Tennessee, suddenly expired. "His remains lie near the Old Station, unhonored by a single stone, and to the present generation entirely unknown; but he rests from his labors in hope of a resurrection, while his immortal spirit is in the world of bliss and of glory." Others well known to the present generation of Methodists were also thrust out into the vineyard: John Ray, Benjamin Northcott, Joseph Lillard, and Joseph Tatman. In the year 1791 Henry Burchet and David Haggard, from the Virginia Conference, and James O'Cull, from the Redstone country, were sent out as a reinforcement, and united in carrying on the work, which was still in progress, notwithstanding the campaigns that were carried on against the Indians; for during this

time Harmar and St. Clair had both been defeated on the north of the Ohio River, and the country was constantly kept in a state of agitation. Still Methodism held up her head, and presented a bold front. The Societies maintained their ground. In 1792, the number of members being 2,235, and the number of traveling preachers 11, there were about two hundred members to one preacher. "The reader may have some kind of an idea what kind of pecuniary support they had: traveling and preaching, night and day, in weariness and want; many days without the necessaries of life, and always without those comforts that are now enjoyed by traveling preachers; with worn and tattered garments, but happy, and united like a band of brothers. The Quarterly Meetings and Annual Conferences were high times. When the pilgrims came they never met without embracing each other, and never parted without weeping. Those were days that tried men's souls."

Thomas Williamson was a very successful and laborious itinerant. He wore himself out preaching, but ended his days in peace in the State of Kentucky, not far from Lexington. Wilson Lee was one of the most successful preachers of the times. He was a man of fine talents, meek and humble, of a sweet disposition, and not only a Christian, but much of a gentleman. During his stay in the West, from 1787 to 1792, he traveled over all the settlements of Kentucky and Cumberland, much admired and beloved. While he traveled in Kentucky he passed through many sufferings and privations, in weariness and want, in hunger and nakedness; hastening from fort to fort, sometimes with a guard and sometimes alone; often exposing his life to the savages, for scarcely a week passed without reports of some one falling a prey to them; and

what is said of Lee may be said of all the Western preachers, as it respects their perils, till the year 1794, the year of Wayne's campaign, when the northern Indians were finally subdued.

In 1791 Henry Burchet was sent from the Virginia Conference, and stationed on Lexington Circuit; in 1792 on Salt River. On both these circuits he was eminently useful. He was very zealous, and declined no labor or suffering, but offered himself a willing sacrifice. He was among the first preachers in the West who took a deep interest in the rising generation. In every neighborhood, where it was practicable, he formed the children into classes, sang and prayed with and catechised them. In this labor he had a peculiar aptitude, and was remarkably successful. He fell at last in his work. At a Conference it appeared that Cumberland must be left without a preacher. Burchet said, "Here am I, send me." His friends remonstrated against his going; the distance was great; there was considerable danger from Indians; the small-pox prevailed in the country, and he was sick; but after asking the consent of Bishop Asbury and the Conference, he said, "If I perish who can doubt of my eternal rest?" He labored with great success in Cumberland, and though much afflicted, he held on his way till late in the fall, when he was obliged to stop traveling. He was a welcome guest at the house of a rich planter, two miles west of Nashville, by the name of James Hockett, where he remained, enjoying the hospitality of the family and the visits of his numerous friends, till the month of February, 1794, when he died in hope of eternal blessedness.[20]

[20] I often visited his grave in 1795 and 1798; but I suppose since that day strangers are in the possession of the premises, and every vestige of the spot where he lies is obliterated, and, with the exception of a few, his name is forgotten. It is now forty-five years since Henry Burchet

In 1791 James Haw located[21] and settled on the Cumberland River, where he became infected with O'Kelly's opinions; in 1801 he joined the Presbyterians, and died among them.[22]

We have followed Asbury repeatedly to these new fields, but without delaying to record the particulars of his visits, except in the instance of 1788, when he held the first Conference for the Holston country. In 1790, accompanied by Whatcoat, he again crossed the Alleghanies, and reached the interior of Kentucky. As they got among the Tennessean heights, from the south-east, and crossed the "Stone Mountain," Asbury wrote: "They who wish to know how rough it is may tread in our path." "Up the Iron Mountain we ascended, where we had many a seat to rest, and many a weary step to climb." "Now," he added the next day, "it is that we must prepare for danger in going through the wilderness. I received a faithful letter from Brother Poythress in Kentucky, encouraging me to come. This letter I think well deserving of publication. I found the poor preachers indifferently clad, with emaciated bodies, and subject to hard fare; yet I hope they are rich in faith."

Soon after he remarks: "We are now in a house in which a man was killed by the savages; and O, poor creatures, they are but one remove from savages themselves. I consider myself in danger, but my God will keep me while thousands pray for me." Whatcoat, his traveling companion, gives a fuller account of these Episcopal adventures in the far West. "After preaching,"

ceased to labor and to live. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them."—*Burke.*

[21] Burke says his "labors closed" in 1789.

[22] Finley's Sketches, p. 48.

he says, "at several places in Georgia and North Carolina, we passed on for Kentucky. As we journeyed toward Holston night overtook us and we were shut in between two mountains. We gave our horses a little provender out of our sacks, let them loose, and struck up a fire; but a thunder-gust nearly put it out. The next day we pursued our journey toward General Russell's, and there we were kindly entertained. After a few days' rest we traveled on to the last station, in the Grassy Valley, expecting to meet a company to conduct us through the wilderness, according to appointment; but no company was heard of, and next morning our horses were gone. That day diligent search was made, but no horses were found; so the next day we packed up our saddles and baggage on Brother T. Henderson's horse, and returned ten miles back into the settlement. After we had been there a little while two boys followed us with our three horses. We traveled about the settlement, and held meetings for about a fortnight. One morning Bishop Asbury told me that he dreamed that he saw two men well mounted, who told him they were come to conduct him to Kentucky, and had left their company in the Grassy Valley. So it was. After preaching they made their appearance. We then got our horses shod, mustered up a little provision, joined our company, and passed through the wilderness, about one hundred and fifty miles. The first day we came to the new station. Here we lay under cover; but some of the company had to watch all night. The next two nights we watched by turns, some watching while others lay down. As there was not a good understanding between the savages and the white people, we traveled in jeopardy; but I think I never traveled with more solemn awe and serenity of mind. As we fed our

horses three times a day, so we had prayer three times. Bishop Asbury preached at Henry Reynolds's on the 12th of May, on the 13th at Lexington, and on the 14th our Conference began at Richard Masterson's, near Lexington. We staid about two weeks, and traveled about one hundred miles through the settlements, preached thirteen sermons, and then returned through the wilderness. Suspecting danger from the savages, we traveled one night and two days without lying down to rest. We called at General Russell's, who informed us that he and his lady had found peace with God. We came to George M'Nights, on the Yadkin, the 3d of June. Here the preachers were waiting for the bishop to hold Conference with them. After the Conference closed we passed on, and came to Petersburg the 13th of June, and held Conference there." He adds that "from December 14, 1789, to April 20, 1790, we compute to have traveled two thousand five hundred and seventy-eight miles. Hitherto hath the Lord helped. Glory! glory to our God!"

The bishop records that in his Kentucky journey he was strangely outdone for want of sleep, having been greatly deprived of it through the wilderness; "which is like being at sea in some respects, and in others worse. Our way is over mountains, steep hills, deep rivers, and muddy creeks; a thick growth of reeds for miles together, and no inhabitants but wild beasts and savage men. Sometimes, before I am aware, my ideas would be leading me to be looking out ahead for a fence, and I would, without reflection, try to recollect the houses we should have lodged at in the wilderness. I slept about an hour the first night, and about two the last. We ate no regular meal; our bread grew short, and I was much spent. I saw the graves of the slain.

twenty-four in one camp. I learn that they had set no guard, and that they were up late, playing at cards. A poor woman of the company had dreamed three times that the Indians had surprised and killed them all; she urged her husband to entreat the people to set a guard; but they only abused him, and cursed him for his pains. As the poor woman was relating her last dream the Indians came upon the camp. She and her husband sprung away, one east, the other west, and escaped. She afterward came back and witnessed the carnage. These poor sinners appeared to be ripe for destruction. I received an account of the death of another wicked wretch who was shot through the heart, although he had vaunted, with horrid oaths, that no Creek Indian could kill him. These are some of the melancholy accidents to which the country is subject for the present. As to the land, it is the richest body of fertile soil I have ever beheld."

Of this first Conference in Kentucky, the bishop says that it was held at Masterson's, "a very comfortable house, and kind people." They went through the business "in great love and harmony." He ordained Wilson Lee, Thos. Williamson, and Barnabas M'Henry, elders. There was preaching noon and night, and "souls were converted, and the fallen restored. My soul has been blessed among these people, and I am exceedingly pleased with them. I would not, for the worth of all the place, have been prevented in this visit, having no doubt but that it will be for the good of the present and rising generation. It is true, such exertions of mind and body are trying; but I am supported under it: if souls are saved it is enough. Brother Poythress is much alive to God. We fixed a plan for a school, and called it Bethel, and obtained a subscription of upward of three hundred pounds,

in land and money, toward its establishment." Thus early did Methodism attempt to provide education for the West; too early, as we shall hereafter see. Bethel Academy started well, but failed, and in its fall dragged down the noble intellect of Poythress.

On their return they had quite a caravan, and Asbury seems to have directed its movements. He says: "Monday, May 24. We set out on our return through the wilderness with a large and helpless company. We had about fifty people, twenty of whom were armed, and five of whom might have stood fire. To preserve order and harmony we had articles drawn up for and signed by our company, and I arranged the people for traveling according to the regulations agreed upon. Some disaffected gentlemen, who would neither sign nor come under discipline, had yet the impudence to murmur when left behind. The first night we lodged some miles beyond the Hazel-patch. The next day we discovered signs of Indians, and some thought they heard voices; we therefore thought it best to travel on, and did not encamp until three o'clock, halting on the east side of Cumberland River. We had gnats enough. We had an alarm, but it turned out to be a false one. A young gentleman, a Mr. Alexander, behaved exceedingly well; but his tender frame was not adequate to the fatigue to be endured, and he had well-nigh fainted on the road to Cumberland Gap. Brother Massie was captain, and finding I had gained authority among the people, I acted somewhat in the capacity of an adjutant and quartermaster among them. At the foot of the mountain the company separated, the greater part went on with me to Powell's River. Here we slept on the earth, and next day made the Grassy Valley. Several of the company, who were not Methodists, expressed their high approba-

tion of our conduct, and most affectionately invited us to their houses. The journeys of each day were as follow: Monday, forty-five miles; Tuesday, fifty miles; Wednesday, sixty miles."

It was on this journey that he ordained, in Tennessee, the local preacher, Benjamin Van Pelt, the brother of his old friend Van Pelt, of Staten Island; and, soon after, he laid in the grave, with a funeral sermon, the pioneer hero, John Tunnell. On re-entering North Carolina he hastened to M'Knight's, on the Yadkin River, "where the Conference," he says, "had been waiting for me nearly two weeks. We rejoiced together, and my brethren received me as one brought from the jaws of death." "I rode," he adds, "about three hundred miles to Kentucky in six days, and on my return about five hundred miles in nine days." Such was the primitive Episcopacy of Methodism. Can the success of the denomination remain a problem to any thoughtful man after such an example of the manner in which its highest dignitary labored and suffered? The humblest Itinerant in its vast field grew great with such a model before him.

In the spring of 1792 the bishop was again traversing these mountains and wildernesses from Georgia. He had to ford creeks, "steeped to the waist," to lodge in wretched cabins, sometimes among "such a set of sinners as made it next to hell itself." He traveled with immigrants and a guard. Swimming Laurel River, they reached Rock Castle, Kentucky, on the 3d of April. The next day he wrote: "How much I have suffered in this journey is known only to God and myself. What added much to its disagreeableness is the extreme filthiness of the houses." He arrived at Bethel, where he held the Kentucky Conference, amid a vast gathering of the settlers of all the surrounding regions. "I am," he

says, "Too much in company, and hear so much about Indians, convention, treaty, killing, and scalping, that my attention is drawn more to these things than I could wish. I found it good to get alone in the woods and converse with God." On the 30th he writes: "An alarm was spreading of a depredation committed by the Indians on the east and west frontiers of the settlement. In the former, report says one man was killed; in the latter, many men, with women and children. Everything is in motion. There having been so many about me at Conference, my rest was much broken. I hoped now to repair it, and get refreshed before I set out to return through the wilderness; but the continual arrival of people until midnight, the barking of dogs, and other annoyances, prevented. Next night we reached the Crab Orchard, where thirty or forty people were compelled to crowd into one mean house. We could get no more rest here than we did in the wilderness. We came the old way by Scagg's Creek and Rock Castle, supposing it to be safer, as it was a road less frequented, and therefore less liable to be waylaid by the savages. My body by this time is well tried. I had a violent fever and pain in the head, such as I had not lately felt. I stretched myself on the cold ground, and borrowing clothes to keep me warm, by the mercy of God I slept four or five hours. Next morning we set off early and passed beyond Richland Creek. Here we were in danger if anywhere. I could have slept, but was afraid. Seeing the drowsiness of the company I walked the encampment, and watched the sentries the whole night. Early next morning we made our way to Robinson's station. We had the best company I ever met with, thirty-six good travelers and a few warriors; but we had a pack-horse, some old men, and two tired horses. These were not the best part

Saturday, May 5. Through infinite mercy we came safe to Crabb's. Rest, poor house of clay, from such exertions! Return, O my soul, to thy rest!"

He held the Holston Conference in the second week in May, and, passing through a valley where for fifty miles there was no house, he at last reached Uniontown, Penn., still beyond the Alleghanies, "both men and horses sore and weary." "O how good," he exclaims there, "are clean houses, plentiful tables, and populous villages, when compared with the rough world we have come through! Here I turned out our poor horses to pasture and to rest, after riding them nearly three hundred miles in eight days."

The local traces of the great Methodist bishop in these Western wilds are still sacred places of pilgrimage to Methodists. "I confess," says a traveler, visiting one of them in the Holston Mountains, "to a peculiar train of emotions as I walked amid the scenes once familiar to the apostle of American Methodism. One place is a quiet East Tennessee Valley, a few miles north of the Paint Rock, on the French Broad River. Along the tortuous course of this headlong mountain-born stream the itinerant bishop used to travel, as you will see by reference to his Journal. Before he would ascend this stream from the valley of East Tennessee to the Carolinas he would here pause, as if to summon his energies for the difficult task; and then again, on his return through these lofty mountains, the most elevated in the Union east of the Rocky Range, he would pause again at this wayside home as if to rest from the fatigue of the way. Here he tarried and preached and wrote and refreshed himself, and thanked God and took courage. The house is a nondescript in modern architecture, and is venerable for its age. It was built in troublous times with the Indians.

and in what were then the extreme borders of civiliza tion. The Cherokees, in some respects the greatest tribe of aborigines, had their seat of empire but a few leagues distant, and at that time claimed all the country along these valleys as theirs. Hence the building was wisely put up of massive logs from the great forest, well hewn and strongly fitted together; the chimneys large, and built of limestone rocks obtained near by. They are two in number, and are placed outside the ends of the house. An old-fashioned porch runs the whole length of the building. There appears to have been originally no windows in the lower story for Indian eyes or bullets. The upper story is attic, very low. There are two rooms above corresponding with the two below, and are furnished with small fireplaces, the flues communicating with the chimneys. Each of these upper rooms is well ceiled, the ceiling overhead being fitted to the rafters. They are furnished with eight, though small, windows in the gable, there being one on each side of the chimneys, composed of eight panes. The south room in the attic still goes by the name of 'The Bishop's Room.' Here were his candlestick and table and bed, etc. The bed occupied a corner, and when the wayfaring bishop rested his weary head upon his pillow it was in close proximity to the roof. Here, I doubt not, he slept soundly to the music of the falling rain. Here he slept and roamed in dreams over all his wide-extended work, perchance back to his European home and friends, and then waked to the stern realities of the Western wilderness. Hard by the door of the bishop's wayside home springs from the earth a mammoth fountain of the purest water, abundant enough to supply a great city. It is environed with huge primitive limestone rocks, in the crevices of which ancient elms rear aloft their great forms, and spread wide

their giant arms that have battled with the storms of many centuries. On these rocks, beneath these great trees, once sat the man of God, thankful for this cooling fountain, as he rested from the toils of his continent-circuit. To him such a retreat must have been exceedingly grateful. The host and hostess of Asbury have long since followed him to the region of the dead. The old homestead descended to a son, who retains a lively memory of the good old bishop. But the wayside home of Asbury, like the tombs of the prophets and the sepulcher of the Saviour, has passed into the hands of unbelievers and enemies."[23]

Thus had Methodism broken through the mountain barriers of the West. Soon after our present chronological period we shall find it extending energetically over the great Valley of the Mississippi.[24] By the close of this period there were nearly five thousand seven hundred recognized Methodists and thirty-five traveling preachers beyond the Alleghanies. It will not be many years before we shall see organized the great "old Western Conference," reaching from the Lakes to Natchez, with its giant itinerants, M'Kendree, Roberts, Scott, Kobler, Lakin, Sale, Parker, Blackman, Beauchamp, Collins, Young, Strange, Raper, Cartwright, Finley, Elliott, and hosts of others—the men who chiefly laid the moral foundations of the mighty states of the Mississippi Valley.

[23] Rev. J. H. Bruner, in St. Louis Christian Advocate, November, 1859.

[24] "Ohio" is recorded in the Minutes as early as 1787; but it designated a circuit in Pennsylvania and Virginia, on the eastern bank of the river. Methodism entered the state under the labors of M'Cormick, a local preacher, in 1796, as we shall hereafter have occasion to notice.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO THE NORTH AMERICAN BRITISH PROVINCES.

The Christmas Conference and Missions — Garrettson and Cromwell go to Nova Scotia — Garrettson in Halifax — His Letter to Coke — Introduction of Methodism in the Eastern Provinces — True Epoch of Methodism in the Western Hemisphere: Note — John Coughlan and John M'Geary in Newfoundland — William Black in Nova Scotia — John Mann — Garrettson's Travels and Sufferings — African Methodists — Refugees — They Originate the Wesleyan Missions in Africa — Extraordinary Results — Garrettson Itinerating — He Writes to Wesley and Asbury — His Perils — Methodism Enters Upper Canada — William Losee Crosses the St. Lawrence — Self-propagating Power of Methodism — Local Preachers in Canada — Barbara Heck — Commissary Tuppey Preaches in Quebec — Major Neal Preaches in Upper Canada — Lyons and M'Carty — A Methodist Martyr — Christian Warner, the First Canadian Class-leader — Losee in Canada — His Character — John Robbin, the First Local Preacher — Early Classes — First Circuit — First Chapel — Results.

We have already noticed how the West India Missions of Methodism sprung from the Christmas Conference at Baltimore; how, indeed, the whole Wesleyan missionary enterprise, as a scheme of foreign evangelization, is a result of the influence of that great occasion on the mind of Coke. The presence of William Black there, with his appeal for preachers for Nova Scotia, inspired the enthusiastic soul of the bishop. He not only set apart Garrettson and Cromwell for the distant field, and begged and gave funds for their support, but returned to England to procure additional men and money for it. The storms of the ocean, driving him with his ministerial recruits from near the shores of

Nova Scotia to the British Antilles, not only providentially led to the founding of the missions of the latter, but did not defeat his plans for the former. Garrettson and Cromwell embarked for Halifax about the middle of February, 1785. They had a boisterous passage of nearly two weeks. "I never," wrote Garrettson, "saw so dismal a time before; but through the amazing goodness of God we were brought safely to Halifax, and were very kindly received by a Mr. Marchington, a true friend to the Gospel."

Marchington hired a house for public worship and Garrettson immediately began his labors. In a few days he formed the first Methodist Society of Halifax, comprising seven or eight members. Cromwell set out for Shelburn, and Garrettson projected "a tour through the country." Before departing he wrote to Coke, "I am well assured we shall have hard work this year, but who would not labor and suffer in so good a cause. I bless God for health, and as great a desire as ever to do his blessed will, and spend and be spent in the best of causes. I am fully persuaded that our voyage to this part of the world was of God; the very time when preachers of our order ought to have come."

Garrettson was the founder of Methodism in Halifax, but not in the eastern British provinces. It is a noteworthy fact that it dates there from the year 1765, one year earlier than its epoch in the United States.[1] In that year John Coughlan, a Wesleyan preacher, was, at

[1] The true epoch of Methodism in the western hemisphere is 1760, when Gilbert formed the first Society at Antigua. Had its centenary been observed all Methodists of the new world could have shared in its celebration, an advantage which the epoch of the Church, in neither the North American British provinces nor in the United States, admits. Should its next return be celebrated, what trophies may the denomination exhibit if it maintains till then its integrity!

the instance of Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon, sent to Newfoundland by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.[2] During seven years he pursued his solitary labors, suffering much of the time severe persecutions. He was prosecuted in the highest court of the island, but was acquitted; abusive letters were written to England against him; a physician was engaged to poison him, but, becoming converted, exposed the diabolical design. Meanwhile the success of the missionary increased; he added many converts to his Society; but the fury of his enemies became still more violent. They had him summoned before the governor, a discerning and resolute officer, who not only acquitted him, but made him a justice of the peace. His opposers were now reduced to quiet, and the persecuted preacher pursued his labors with increased effect. His health at last failed, and he returned to England. John M'Geary was subsequently sent by Wesley to occupy the vacant post. He found that the good work begun by Coughlan had dwindled after his departure, and was nearly extinct. Some of the converts had gone to their eternal rest, others had backslidden, and only about fifteen females remained in the Society.[3] He labored in Carbonear, but with such slight results that he was about to abandon the field in despair, when, in 1791, William Black arrived from Nova Scotia. Black has already on several occasions come under our notice. As the chief, though not the original, founder of Methodism in the eastern British provinces, his memory will forever be precious to the Church in those borean regions. He was born in Huddersfield, England, in 1760. In 1774 he emigrated with

[2] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii. pp 329, 352.
[3] Richey's Memoir of Black, chap. ii.

his family to Nova Scotia. They found a few Methodist settlers at Amherst, who, without a pastor, maintained meetings for exhortation and prayer. It was at these meetings that the young emigrant received his first effectual impressions of the truth in 1779. After nearly five weeks of religious anguish, an old Methodist, who was praying with him, said, "I think you will get the blessing before morning." "About two hours after," says Black, "while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart." He now introduced domestic worship into his father's house, and soon most if not all its members were converted. In 1780 he began to exhort in public at Fort Lawrence, and with such success that two hundred persons were gathered into classes, one hundred and thirty of whom professed to have "passed from death unto life." He had, in fine, become a preacher, and before long was "itinerating," proclaiming the faith at Amherst, Fort Lawrence, Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth, Windsor, and Halifax. Methodism was thus permanently founded in Nova Scotia. In 1784 his Societies were too numerous for him to supply them alone. He went to the United States to consult Coke, as we have seen, and procured the appointment of Garrettson and Cromwell. In 1786 his name occurs for the first time in Wesley's Minutes, though he had devoted himself exclusively to ministerial labors for five years, and his circuit embraced the whole province, extended to Newfoundland, and at last took in New Brunswick. On the arrival of the missionaries from the United States he did not relax his labors, but extended them further and further, till he reached M'Geary, who was desponding at Carbonear, and about to leave the field. "I have been weeping before the Lord," exclaimed M'Geary to him, "over my lonely

situation and the darkness of the people, and your coming is like life from the dead." Black immediately began to preach in the town; an extraordinary revival ensued, and the mission was retrieved. His visit to the island is pronounced "the most useful and interesting portion of his missionary life."[4] Two hundred souls were converted during his stay at Conception Bay. He organized Methodism in the province, secured its church property, encouraged and fortified its classes, and obtained new laborers from Wesley. The people of Newfoundland had received him as a messenger from God, and dismissed him, at his return to Nova Scotia, with benedictions and tears. "I think," he says, "I never had so affecting a parting with any people before. It was hard work to tear away from them. I was nearly an hour shaking hands with them, some twice and thrice over, and even then we hardly knew how to part; but I at last rushed from among them, and left them weeping as for an only son." This apostle of Methodism in the eastern British provinces lived to see it generally and firmly established in those regions. He died in 1834, at the advanced age of seventy-four years, exclaiming, "God bless you! all is well!" and leaving in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland three Methodist districts, forty-four circuits, about fifty itinerant and many local preachers, with more than six thousand members.

John Mann, one of the earliest converts of Boardman in New York, and for some time during the Revolutionary War the pastor of the John-street Church, had gone to Nova Scotia, and was now an energetic colaborer there with Black and Garrettson.[5] He resided at Shel-

[4] Rev. Richard Knight, in Wesleyan Magazine, 1837, p. 487.
[5] Memoir of Mann, Arminian Magazine, 1818.

burne, where he preached regularly every Sunday. With him many refugees went from New York to the province, and were the germs of its Methodist Societies. The disloyalty of these people to the American government, or rather their loyalty to the British king, became thus providentially a means of the promotion of Methodism in the extreme north-east. Mann visited the United States for ordination, and was consecrated by Coke to the offices of deacon and elder. Returning to Nova Scotia, he labored faithfully and successfully, founding the Church in many places. His name appears in the Minutes of 1786 as one of the little band of three preachers for the province, Garrettson being the Elder, Black and Mann his itinerants. Mann deservedly ranks as one of the founders of Methodism in Nova Scotia. He labored diligently, and died triumphantly in the faith at the age of seventy-three, in 1816, at Newport, N. S.

Garrettson sent Cromwell immediately to Shelburne, but continued some time in Halifax, preaching daily, and three times on Sunday. He had some opposition. "One night," he says, "the stones flew, and one stone of nearly a pound weight was leveled at me, but missed its aim, and struck out two panes of glass near my head. This is but trifling if I can win souls to Jesus." He set out to travel at large through the province. In later years, referring to these early times, he says, "I have traveled, though the snow was deep, about three hundred miles in two weeks, and preached twenty sermons to many attentive hearers." He found many Methodists from the United States and from England scattered through the country, like sheep without a shepherd, and formed them into classes. He met with a Society of colored Methodists, refugee slaves from the United States, who, without white pastors, had organized themselves into a Church,

"with whom," says his biographer, "he was much comforted; whom he endeavored to bring into Gospel order by forming sixty of them into a class, administering baptism to nineteen, and the Lord's Supper to about forty, most of whom he trusted loved God and one another." How are we struck, at every turn of our narrative of these primitive times, with the evidences of a special Providence! These African Methodists, discovered in the itinerant wanderings of Garrettson, were to be the founders of Methodism in Sierra Leone, and of the whole scheme of Methodistic evangelization in Africa. In 1792 about twelve hundred of the refugees were transported to Sierra Leone; the Methodists among them formed classes; two white local preachers, by the names of Brown and Gordon, conducted their religious services; a chapel was erected, and after some time Mingo Jordan, a colored man, began to labor among them. In 1806 Brown wrote to Coke imploring ministerial assistance. We can further trace their obscure history in a letter addressed to Adam Clarke, in 1808, by Mingo Jordan, sketching his labors among the Maroons from 1805 to 1808. He reports that the converts and the members of the Society in and about Sierra Leone amounted to one hundred He had baptized twenty Maroons on one day, and they had "begun to subscribe two cents each per week for the further promotion of the Gospel of Christ."[6] When George Warren, the first Wesleyan missionary, arrived, in 1811, he found two Methodist chapels, three local preachers, six class-leaders, and one hundred and ten members. The colony at this early day was a scene of enormous depravity. Its climate is fatal to Europeans, but Wesleyan missionaries have always been ready to be sacrificed for its Churches. Warren died the next year after

[6] Meth. Mag., 1808, p. 572

his arrival, and during about forty years one hundred and twenty-three missionaries and their wives have been sent to it, nearly one half of whom have died by the climate, while many others have had to return with broken constitutions. William Davies and Samuel Brown followed Warren. The mission quickly extended eastward, from Freetown, to Wellington, Hastings, Waterloo, and Murraytown; and southward to York and Plantains Island; and some of the most extraordinary instances of religious awakenings with which the Wesleyan Missions have been blessed have taken place within its limits. Schools have been erected, in which three thousand six hundred children are receiving Christian education. An "institute," for the training of a native ministry, has been begun, promising to save hereafter the great sacrifice of European laborers in the mission.

Thus was Garrettson's colored Society in Nova Scotia the beginning of those English and American Methodist missionary efforts for Africa which have interspersed its western, southern, and south-eastern coasts with posts of successful evangelical labor. Their marvelous results justify this brief digression. In fine, Methodist evangelization in Africa forms one of the most heroic chapters of modern Christian history. Its success is astonishing if we consider its peculiar disadvantages from the climate, the extreme degradation of the population, and the ravages of almost continual wars. The introduction of the elementary arts of civilization, printing-presses, schools, chapels; a considerable native ministry, and institutions for their training; about three hundred and twenty local preachers, nearly one hundred missionaries, at nearly one hundred stations, besides scores of other paid, and hundreds of unpaid agents, and more than sixteen thousand communicants, give promise

that the great work begun will go on till it shall shake down this formidable stronghold of paganism, and spread Christian civilization over the continent. The African Missions have at least served, above all other foreign stations of Methodism, to prolong the heroic period of its history; it has received, in this field, more of the honors of martyrdom, from the climate, than in all the rest of the earth, and it has never retreated before the inexorable peril.[7]

But let us return to Garrettson. He went to Granville, to Digby, where he formed a small Society; to Liverpool, where he spent four weeks, and founded a Society of sixteen members; to Shelburne, where his congregations were crowded. He preached in all the neighboring settlements. "He remained," says his biographer, "about six weeks in this place, during which time he received one hundred and fifty members into the Society. It was not all fair weather, however, while he was here. He says he was stoned, had rotten eggs thrown at him, and when he embarked for Liverpool, the captain of a man-of-war cried out, 'Hail for the Methodist preacher!' and soon a gun was fired, which obliged them to lower sail, and he had to submit to have his trunk examined, but was dismissed with no other annoyance than the sound of some blasphemous oaths from the sailors. 'Blessed be God,' he says, 'they had not power to hurt me.' After a stormy passage he arrived at Liverpool. Here he remained two weeks, preaching the word with much assurance and comfort. From thence he embarked for Halifax, and found the Society he had left in peace. He remained in this place until the first day of February, during which time he had the happiness of receiving into

[7] History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, etc., iii, 352.

society, as a broken-hearted penitent, a person who before had been famous for pouring contempt upon religion. He also visited the towns of Horton and Cornwallis, and preached with great freedom, evenings, as well as in the day-time. To be idle, while he beheld so many precious souls 'in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,' he could not. We therefore find him braving the storms and tempests, from one place to another, traveling on foot through snow and mud, where the roads were too bad to admit his traveling on horseback, that he might, as widely as possible, extend the empire of his divine Lord and Master." In his semi-centennial sermon he says that he traversed the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with his knapsack on his back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness, when it was not expedient to take a horse; that he had often to wade through morasses half leg deep in mud and water; frequently satisfying his hunger with a piece of bread and pork from his knapsack, quenching his thirst from a brook, and resting his weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. But "thanks be to God!" he exclaims, "he compensated me for all my toil, for many precious souls were awakened and converted."

In April, 1786, Garrettson wrote to Wesley an account of his prospects. He says: "Some weeks ago I left Halifax and went to Liverpool, where the Lord is carrying on a blessed work; many precious souls of late have been set at liberty to praise a sin-pardoning God. There is a lively Society. The greater part of the town attend our ministry, and the first people have joined our Society. A few days ago I came to this town, where I met dear afflicted Cromwell, and was glad to find him able to set out for Liverpool and Halifax. Our chapel in Shelburne is not able to contain the congregation, and at

present our friends are not able to build a larger. The people in Halifax have had very little preaching of late, at which they are much tried. It is impossible for us to supply half the places where they want us. I have written to Mr. Asbury for help, but with no certainty of obtaining it, as the work seems to be spreading among them. I meet with many difficulties, but a moment's contemplation of the eternal world weighs down all. A man who labors for God in this country needs a greater degree of grace, fortitude, and wisdom than I possess. We have bought two horses, which will do for the present. In some places the people will be able to support the Gospel. In general they are poor; but in my opinion this country wants nothing but pure religion and industry to make it desirable. I want to die to the world, and live wholly to God. This is the constant prayer and desire of your unworthy servant." In March of the same year he wrote again to Wesley: "By a storm Dr. Coke was driven to Antigua, and it is not certain when he will be here. We are much disappointed, but hope it will all work together for good." We have already seen the verification of this hope. "My time this winter," he continues, "has been spent mostly in Horton, Windsor, and Cornwallis. In the former there has been a divine display; many convinced and converted to God. A few months ago the place was famous for the works of the devil—now for singing, praying, and hearing the Word. If the work continue much longer as it has done, the greater part of the people will be brought in. I have had a blessed winter among them. The work greatly revives to the West. John Mann (a young man God has lately given us, whose praise is in the Churches) writes: 'God is carrying on his work in a glorious manner in Barrington; the people flock from every quarter

to hear the Word; many have been convinced, and about fourteen have been set at liberty, some of whom were famous for all manner of wickedness. The fields here seem white for harvest.' Cromwell has had his station in Shelburne, but is very poorly. He writes: 'There seem to be very dull times in this town; hundreds have the small-pox, etc. The Lord enabled me to go on as far as Cape Negro. I could only stay to preach a few sermons, etc. It would do you good to see the dear people, some rejoicing, and others mourning; depend upon it, there is a blessed revival here. I returned to Shelburne very poorly, and expect, if God spares my life, to go home early in the spring.' John Mann, at Liverpool, writes: 'I am greatly comforted under an expectation of an ingathering here; the Society is very lively; several added, and several lately converted,' etc. Black is very steady and zealous in our cause, and has gone for a few weeks to the country. I can say this for Halifax, they are very kind in supporting Black's family; I think they give a guinea a week, and they have got a famous chapel nearly ready to preach in; it will contain a thousand people. Religion, I fear, is not very deep as yet. Since I wrote this letter I received one from Mann at Liverpool, saying: 'The Lord has broken in, in a wonderful manner, among the people, especially among the young. Within a few days twenty have been set at liberty; nine were converted one night.' Surely the Lord will do great things for us." To Asbury he wrote: "I have seen neither Cromwell, Black, nor Mann since last fall, though I have frequently conversed with them by letter. My time this winter has been spent in Halifax, and in the different towns between that and Annapolis. In Cornwallis, the last time I was there I put a chapel on foot; there were nearly five

hundred dollars subscribed. On my return I put one on foot in Windsor. In this town God has given us a loving Society. A few friends are willing to build one at Annapolis, though they have had very little preaching for six months. This day they began to draw stone for building a church in this town also. Halifax, where there are forty members, will employ one preacher; Horton Circuit will employ another, where I left sixty members; Annapolis Circuit will employ another, where I left nearly one hundred members last fall; but how they are now I know not. In these three districts I expect Cromwell, Black, and Grandine will be stationed. Grandine is a young man we have taken on trial; I think he will be a preacher. Mann must take his station at Liverpool, where there are about forty members. There is Cumberland, which would employ two preachers: however, one at present would do; there are about fifty members. In and around Shelburne there are between two and three hundred members, white and black. Then there is the city of St. John, and the country all around; I suppose there are twenty thousand souls. A few of our friends are scattered in that part; but in all that space there is only one clergyman, an old church parson. I was informed by a respectable man from the east that there are hundreds of souls entirely destitute of the Gospel. I have heard very little from Newfoundland. So you may see we are in want of three preachers. There are several thousand colored people in this province, and the greater part of them are willing to be instructed. What do you think of sending Harry here this spring?[8] I think he would be very useful. I have no doubt but the people will support their preachers in this country."

[8] "Black Harry," who has heretofore been noticed.

Thus Garrettson traversed the province, and kept it astir with religious interest. In his latter years his adventures, in this remote section, afforded many a thrilling reminiscence for the entertainment of his friends, gathered about him in his retreat at Rhinebeck. "I well remember," writes his daughter, "the delight with which I used to climb his knee, and the importunity with which I used to beg for a story about Nova Scotia; and in riper years—but those halcyon days are forever flown; tears will not recall them. At one time, in order to attend his appointment, he rode through an unfrequented country, the hail driving in his face until, nearly benumbed, he was obliged to lay the reins on the neck of his horse, and leave the animal by his own instinct to keep the road. There was no visible track, and turning out of the road in that country exposed the traveler to the greatest fatigue, as his horse sunk in the mass of unbeaten snow. At length he arrived at the only house he had seen; his horse stopped at the door, and he had only life enough left to walk in and throw himself on the bed. None but children were within, who covered him with plenty of bed-clothes, while he lay almost insensible for nine hours, and had nearly forfeited his valuable life by too great eagerness in his Master's cause. He had often to cross the St. John, whose tide recedes, leaving its bed nearly empty, and again comes roaring up with great velocity and force, sweeping everything before it, and elevating on its waves the vessels and ships which it had left dry. During its recession its bed is fordable: but in winter the crossing is dangerous, on account of the large masses of ice it leaves behind. On one occasion his guide, instead of leading him up the river, went down, and they were not apprized of their danger until they saw the tide fast roaring toward them. The guide

shrieked out, 'Put spurs to your horse, and make for the nearest land!' He did so, although uncertain whether it would be accessible when attained, for the shores thereabout were very bold and rugged. His horse was fleet; the shore was accessible; he outrode the wave, which swept over the back of his horse just as he had set foot upon the land. I have often heard my father say that if he had only been half the length of his horse's body behind, he should have been swept off like a feather on the tide."

He continued in Nova Scotia till the spring of 1787, when he returned to the United States, leaving about seven hundred Methodists in the classes of that province and Newfoundland.[9] The Methodism of "Eastern British America" has, by our day, grown to mature strength; it ranks, in the Wesleyan Minutes, as a Conference with eight districts, nearly one hundred circuits, more than a hundred and twenty preachers, numerous chapels, many of them costly edifices, academies, and periodical organ, Book Concern, missions, and thousands of communicants.[10]

Before the present term of our narrative closes, Methodism had penetrated the British North American possessions at another point—in what was then the remote Western frontier. We have seen that in Garrettson's great pioneer scheme for the Upper Hudson he projected, as his northernmost outpost, in 1788, the Lake Champlain Circuit, with Samuel Wigton as its solitary itinerant. The next year, William Losee, with David Kendall as his colleague, traveled this frontier territory. Their journeys brought them within sight of Canada. The circuit seems not, however, to have been successful, for in 1790 it was abandoned. It is supposed that Losee

[9] Wesleyan Minutes, 1787, vol. i, p. 198 [10] Ibid., 1860.

received permission from Garrettson (in the winter of 1789–90) to range at large, seeking a more eligible field. He had kindred in Upper Canada, and went among them preaching the Gospel; he thus became, so far as the regular ministry is concerned, the apostle of Methodism in that province, and 1790 is usually recognized as its epoch. In January of this year Losee crossed the St. Lawrence.[11]

We have often been reminded, in the course of this narrative, of the adaptation of Methodism, by some of its providential peculiarities, for its self-propagation. Its class and prayer-meetings trained most, if not all, its laity to practical missionary labor, and three or four of them, meeting in any distant part of the earth, by the emigrations of these times, were prepared immediately to become the nucleus of a Church. The lay or local ministry, borne on by the tide of population, were almost everywhere found, prior to the arrival of regular preachers, ready to sustain religious services—the pioneers of the Church in nearly every new field. The year 1790 was not the real epoch of Methodism in Canada. The sainted Barbara Heck, foundress of the Church in the United States, went with her children, it is probable, into the province as early as 1774. The wife and children of Embury also went thither, and the names of these memorable families recur often, in the primitive annals of the denomination, from Augusta to Quebec. Mrs. Heck and her three sons were members of a class at Augusta, under the leadership of Samuel, son of Philip Embury.[12]

[11] Playter's History of Methodism in Canada, p. 21. Toronto. 1862. Bangs erroneously says (i, 323) that Losee went into Canada in 1791. Not only Playter, but Rev. Anson Green (Letter, March 2, 1860, in Canada Christian Guardian) corrects him.

[12] "Her three sons came with her to Canada. John, the eldest, returned to some other part of the United States, and died early. Jacob

In 1780 a local preacher, by the name of Tuppey, was a commissary of a British regiment at Quebec. A devout and zealous man, and grieved at the general demoralization around him, he began earnestly to preach among emigrants and his fellow-soldiers. His regiment was disbanded after the peace; but he had labored about three years, and some of his hearers and converts were left scattered through the settlements of the province. "We may regard this British soldier," says the Canadian historian, "as the first Methodist preacher in Canada."[13]

The second was George Neal, an Irish local preacher, and major of a cavalry regiment of the British army. He crossed the Niagara River, at Queenstown, on the 7th of October, 1786, anticipating Losee by some four years. Bangs, who early traveled the circuits of that region, says, "He was a holy man of God, and an able minister of the New Testament. His word was blessed to the awakening and conversion of many souls, and he was always spoken of by the people with great affection and veneration as the pioneer of Methodism in that country. Among those who first joined the Society may be mentioned Christian Warner, who lived near what is now called St. Davids, and became a class-leader;

and Samuel continued to reside in Canada, and lived to an advanced age. Samuel died in 1841, and Jacob in 1843. The writer knew Jacob and Samuel personally, and has conversed with the former about the facts referred to. He is the brother-in-law of Samuel's youngest son; and he writes this letter in the township of Augusta, in Samuel's late residence, within sight of Jacob's late residence, and within three quarters of a mile of the churchyard where the mortal remains of Paul and Barbara Heck, with those of their sons Jacob and Samuel, their wives, and some of their children, repose. He has stood by their graves this very day." Letter to the author from Rev. John Carroll, of the Wesleyan University, Canada West. See also vol. i, p. 69, and "Christian Guardian," Canada, May 25, 1859.

[13] Playter, p. 10.

his house was a home for the preachers and for preaching for many years. He was considered a father in Israel by all who knew him. The first Methodist meeting-house erected in that part of the country was in his neighborhood. Neal lived to see large and flourishing Societies established through all that country, and at length was gathered to his fathers in a good old age."[14] For some time this military evangelist held up the Methodistic banner, alone, in all the province, but in 1788 two other pioneers entered the field. An exhorter by the name of Lyons came from the United States and opened a school at Adolphustown, in the Bay of Quinte country. "Having a zeal for the Lord," says the local historian, "and seeing ignorance and sin abounding, he collected the people together on Sabbath days, in different neighborhoods, and sung and prayed, and exhorted the people to flee from the wrath to come. He would also pray in the families which he visited. These labors were blessed of the Lord, and some were turned from their sins to God."[15]

In the same year James M'Carty, an Irishman, from the United States, and a convert of Whitefield's ministry, reached Kingston, and passed on to Ernestown, where he found out Robert Perry and other lay Methodists, and began immediately to hold religious meetings in their log-cabins. He is described as a man of attractive manners and speech, and large numbers attended his preaching: probably the first the settlers had heard since they came into Canada. A great effect was apparent. Many were brought to a knowledge of the truth and the enjoyment of religion. His success

[14] Bangs's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, ii, 122. This was not, however, the first Methodist chapel of the province.

[15] Playter, p. 17.

provoked the hostility of leading churchmen. A sheriff, a captain of militia, and an engineer combined to rid the country of his zealous labors, and M'Carty was destined to be honored as the protomartyr of Methodism in Canada. Under a statute against vagabonds, he was seized while preaching, on Sunday, at his friend Perry's house, by four armed men. The indignant congregation opposed them, and as Perry offered to give bail for his appearance, the next day, at the magistrate's office in Kingston, the assailants retired. They had designed to carry the preacher to the Kingston prison. On the next day Perry took him to the sheriff in that town, but the officer refused to have anything to do with them. The conspirators, however, were at hand, and before night had him in prison under some frivolous pretext. Perry again bailed him, but on his return for trial his enemies were resolved that he should never preach again. He was suddenly seized, thrust into a boat, and conveyed by four Frenchmen, hired for the purpose, down the St. Lawrence to the rapids near Cornwall. He was landed on one of the numerous solitary islands of that part of the stream, and may have perished by starvation, or have been drowned in attempting to reach the main shore; but his fate has never been disclosed. The sad mystery has consecrated his name in the history of the Canadian Church. "Undoubtedly," says its historian, "M'Carty was a martyr for the Gospel, and so he was regarded by the early inhabitants."[16]

Such hostility never fails to promote a good cause. The labors and sufferings of Neal, Lyons, and M'Carty led to a demand for regular Methodist preaching among the well-disposed settlers of the Niagara townships and

[16] Playter, p. 18, and Meacham's "History of Methodism." Meacham says that he obtained his facts from Perry, the friend of M'Carty.

the settlements of the Bay of Quinte. They sent, in 1790, petitions to the New York Conference for missionaries, offering to pay their expenses. In this year also Christian Warner, one of the most important Methodist laymen of Canada, was converted under the preaching of Neal. Some of his neighbors followed his example, and Neal organized them into a class, supposed to be the first ever formed in Canada.[17] Christian Warner was appointed its leader, and has, therefore, the honor of being the first Methodist class-leader of the province. He was a native of Albany County, N. Y., and went to Canada in 1777, settling in the township of Stamford, where his house was, for many years, the home of his itinerant brethren and the sanctuary of the first Methodist class. He was a saintly man, a leader all his remaining life, and died in the peace of the Gospel in 1833, the patriarch of Canadian Methodism. His name will often recur in our future references to his adopted country.

In entering Canada, (in 1790,) Losee probably crossed the St. Lawrence at St. Regis, for it seems that he preached in Matilda, Augusta, and Elizabethtown, and then passed up to Kingston, and thence to Adolphustown, where his kindred resided. "One of the first houses he preached in," says our authority, "was John Carscallen's, in Fredericksburgh, on the Bay Shore, near the upper gap; another was at the tavern of Conrad Vandusen, in Adolphustown, near the old court-house; and another at Paul Huff's, on the Hay Bay. In journeying about as a pioneer in the Bay of Quinte townships he found occasionally a person who had heard the Methodist preachers in England, Ireland, or in the United States, by whom

[17] Rev. Edmund Stanley in the Christian Guardian, (Canada), April 24, 1833.

he was welcomed, and sometimes permitted to preach in their log-houses, or shanties; for all that fine country, now so well furnished with large and handsome dwellings, had then houses of the humblest description. A Methodist preacher was a curiosity in those days, and all were anxious to see the phenomenon. Some would even ask how he looked, or what he was like. A peculiarity in Losee, too, was, that he had but one arm; and yet with one hand to use, he could readily mount and dismount his horse, and guide him over the roughest roads and most dangerous crossways. He was a bold horseman, and usually rode his journeys on the gallop. Yet he was a man of very solemn aspect, with straight hair, a long countenance, and grave voice. His talents were not so much for sermonizing as for exhortation. He, and the preachers generally of that day, were of the revival class; laboring, looking, praying for immediate results. His private rebukes were often of a very solemn character. It was the custom of the preachers then to use the word 'smite' in their prayers and sermons. So Losee would often cry, 'Lord, smite them!' and sinners would often be smitten by the Spirit of God, with conviction of sin and terror of the last judgment. The man, his manner, and his style of preaching, caught the attention of the settlers, and young and old filled the houses where he preached. Having preached a few times, he spoke of leaving. The people were now anxious for a missionary to reside among them. The petition already mentioned was circulated and extensively signed in the midland district, praying the New York Conference for a missionary to labor in these new townships. Losee received it, and returned to the United States the same winter. He carried it to the Conference, which assembled in New York, on the 4th of October, and of

course spoke of his visit and of the favorable prospects for the Gospel in Canada, and offered to be the first preacher in these northern climes. Bishop Asbury and the preachers were willing that an entrance should be made at this new door. William Losee, therefore, was allowed to return, with instructions to form a circuit. As the Conference sat so late in the year, he had not time to prepare and return to Canada before the winter."[18]

In 1791, however, Losee was on his way, as soon as the ice of the St. Lawrence was firm enough to allow him to cross with his horse. He traversed the wilds of New York, enduring severe hardships, and passed over the river below Lake Ontario, to Kingston, and in February was rejoicing again among his friends at Adolphustown, the first regular or itinerant Methodist preacher who entered the country. He was yet young, being but about twenty-seven years of age. He flamed with zeal for his new and great work, and he had no cares but those of his office, being unmarried. Giving himself wholly to his mission, he immediately formed a circuit, making "appointments" at every opening. "During the summer his field embraced settlements in the townships of Kingston, Ernestown, Fredericksburgh, and Adolphustown; then he crossed the Bay of Quinte, and extended his circuit into Marysburgh, if not into Sophiasburgh. The good impression made by Losee on his first coming was strengthened by his second. The people received the word with a ready mind, and a number were soon enjoying the salvation of the Gospel. One of his appointments was in the third concession of Adolphustown, in the house of Paul Huff, on the Hay Bay Shore, and on the farm on which the chapel now stands. Here he formed a class,

[18] Playter, p. 22.

the first regularly organized in Canada, on Sunday, February 20,[19] and about the month of May or June a great revival of religion commenced. Two miles west of Paul Huff's, where the meetings on the Hay Bay were held, lived a widow with her four sons and four daughters. Philip Roblin, her husband, died in 1788. The house was larger than ordinary, being two log-houses joined together. Well inclined to the new preacher, the Roblins lodged him and took care of his clothes. A reproof given to John Roblin, accompanied by solemn reflections, led to his seeking the salvation of his soul. On the next Sabbath he attended the meeting burdened with sin and repenting; but he went home a converted man. He went to his room, and, returning to his mother, in the presence of the family, said, "O, mother, the Lord has converted my soul this morning. Let us all kneel down and pray." He now, for the first time, prayed with his mother and brothers and sisters. Then he went to William Moore's, a mile distant, and exhorted and prayed with the family, leaving a deep impression, which soon resulted in a great change of life. William Moore afterward became the class-leader, and bore the character of a very good man. Young Roblin visited other families, warning and praying with them; and thus he spent the first Sabbath of his new life. Dancing was the fashionable frivolity of those times, and the youth met weekly in each other's houses for the dance. John Roblin was the leader in this amusement, and his turning from it induced others to pause, to reflect on their ways, to attend the meetings of the pious, and to seek the salvation of their souls. He held prayer-meetings among the people, and the preacher encouraged him in the new

[19] Not the first organized, but "the first regularly organized;" that is, by a regular preacher. Warner's class, in Stamford, was the first.

work. A great awakening took place, and numbers sought and found the Lord as their Saviour. He afterward became a local preacher, and was a useful man in his day. The people elected him to one or two of the early Parliaments of Upper Canada; but political life was not his desire, and he rather served by constraint than willingly." John Roblin appears, then, to have been the first native local preacher of Canada. The second class was organized on Sabbath, February 27th, in the first concession of Ernestown, and four miles below the village of Bath. The third was formed in Fredericksburgh, on Wednesday, March 2d, in the house of Samuel Detlor, about three miles from the village of Napanee. Thus the three first Societies were organized in ten days, but of the number in each there is no record, nor of other classes which he may have formed before the Conference.

Losee did not return to his Conference in 1791; he was too far away, and too busily employed; but his ministerial brethren remembered him, and elected him to deacon's orders, though his ordination must be indefinitely postponed. His new circuit is recorded in the Minutes as "Kingston," and, oddly enough, is placed under the presiding eldership of Jesse Lee, who, as we shall hereafter see, had now entered New England. Kingston, in Upper Canada, therefore appears on the record in juxtaposition with Lynn, on the sea-coast of Massachusetts. Distance was a small affair in the itinerant schemes of these times. Lee, however, never reached his solitary preacher in the woods of the northwestern frontier.

The Methodist itinerancy was thus initiated in Canada. Its first Methodist chapel was erected at Adolphustown, in 1792. The subscription paper for this edifice is still

extant.[20] It bears the names of Embury, Bininger, Roblin, Huff, Vandusen, Steele, Rutton, Ketcheson, and others, memorable in the early history of the denomination. In the same month the second chapel was begun in Ernestown, for the accommodation of the eastern part of the circuit, the first being at its western end. Both structures were of the same size, thirty-six feet by thirty, two stories high, with galleries. Losee returned to the Conference of 1792 bearing cheering reports of his great field. The Minutes record a hundred and sixty-five members in his Societies; his circuit was divided into two, and he hastened back with Darius Dunham as his colleague. Vast results are to follow; gigantic laborers to appear in the opening wilderness; circuits and Societies to keep pace with the advancing frontier, and to reach eastward to Quebec; Indian missions to arise; Methodist chapels, many of them elegant edifices, to dot the country; a book concern, periodical organs, a university and academies to be provided, and Methodism to become numerically the predominant faith of the people. But these developments belong to later dates of our narrative.

Methodism in the British Provinces, especially in Canada, remained for many years under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is, therefore, relevantly included in the early history of the denomination, and, as we shall hereafter see, is one of its most important results.

[20] The original is in the possession of Rev. Dr. Anson Green, of Canada. See his letter, March 9, 1860, in the Christian Guardian.
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CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO NEW ENGLAND.

The Boston Elm — Lee Preaching beneath it — Description of his Preaching — Reasons for the Introduction of Methodism into the New England States — State of Religion — New England Theology — Edwards and Whitefield — Misapprehension of Arminianism — Reaction of Calvinism — Effect of Methodism.

NEAR the center of the Boston Park, or Common, stands a venerable elm, the crowning ornament of its scenery. Its decayed limbs are held together by clamps and rivets of iron, and a railing defends it from rude hands, for it is sacred in the traditions of New England. It is especially sacred to the Methodists of the eastern metropolis. On a serene afternoon of July, 1790, a man of middle age, of a benign but shrewd countenance, and dressed in a style of simplicity which might have been supposed the guise of a Quaker, took his stand upon a table to preach beneath its branches. Four persons approached, and gazed upon him with surprise, while he sang a hymn. It was sung by his solitary voice; at its conclusion he knelt down upon the table, and stretching forth his hands, prayed with a fervor so unwonted in the cool and minute petitions of the Puritan pulpits, that it attracted the groups of promenaders who had come to spend an evening hour in the shady walks, and by the time he rose from his knees they were streaming in processions, from the different points of the Common, toward him. While he opened his small Bible and preached to them without "notes," but with "the dem-

onstration of the Spirit and of power," the multitude grew into a dense mass, three thousand strong, eagerly catching every utterance of the singular stranger, and some of them receiving his message into "honest and good hearts."

For years the theological opinions of New England had been in violent fermentation. The most contradictory doctrines prevailed. There were Calvinistic Antinomians, and Arminian Pelagians; and the relation of faith and works was a rife question. Both are wrong, cried the stranger from his table. Faith is one oar, works another; he that rows with one does not advance, but only whirls about; he that rows with the other only whirls in the opposite direction; he that works both, in harmony, moves forward and heavenward! A spectator who heard him at or about this time says: "When he stood up in the open air and began to sing, I knew not what it meant. I drew near, however, to listen, and thought the prayer was the best I had ever heard. He then read his text, and began, in a sententious manner, to address his remarks to the understandings and consciences of the people; and I thought all who were present must be constrained to say, 'It is good for us to be here.' All the while the people were gathering he continued this mode of address, and presented us with such a variety of beautiful images, that I thought he must have been at infinite pains to crowd so many pretty things into his memory. But when he entered upon the subject-matter of his text, it was with such an easy, natural flow of expression, and in such a tone of voice, that I could not refrain from weeping; and many others were affected in the same way. When he was done, and we had an opportunity of expressing our views to each other, it was agreed that such a man had not visited New

England since the days of Whitefield. I heard him again, and thought I could follow him to the ends of the earth.[1]"

This evangelist was Jesse Lee, the founder of Methodism in New England; and although the preceding year must be admitted as its true epoch, yet the year of his appearance in the Eastern metropolis, 1790, may be considered the period in which it assumed a definite and secure position. He had arrived in Connecticut in June, 1789, and preached at Norwalk, New Haven, and many other places, and toward the end of the year formed a class in Stratfield, a parish of Stratford, and another at Reading, but these were only preliminary movements. He was alone, surveying the ground. The classes in Stratford and Reading consisted, the first of but three, and the last of but two, members; the former was formed but about three months, and the latter only about three days, prior to 1790. It was in the latter year that a detachment of preachers, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, arrived to prosecute the plans of Lee, and the labors of Methodism in New England were fairly begun. It was also in this year that the Annual Minutes report, for the first time, returns of members from New England towns.[2]

After five years of delay, occasioned chiefly by the hesitancy of his brethren, Lee had at last accomplished his ardent wish of planting the Methodistic standard in the Eastern States. The denomination had spread into all the Atlantic States out of New England; it had penetrated into the primeval wildernesses of the West, and its itin-

[1] Ware's Memoir, chap. xiii.

[2] Memorials of the Introduction of Methodism into the Eastern States, etc., p. 14. Boston. 1848. I have already intimated (see preface) that this work, and also a second volume of similar title, were but the preliminary publication of my New England material.

erant heralds were marching in the van of that vast emigration which has since covered the immense regions of the Ohio and Mississippi with magnificent states. It had even entered Canada, and, passing along the waters of New England, had established itself in Nova Scotia. Why had it not entered the Eastern States earlier? and what special reasons justified its introduction there now? The influence of New England on its subsequent fortunes has been important enough to justify us in pausing here briefly to survey the new field, though we can, in the present volume, but introduce upon it its Methodist pioneers.

Doubtless the greater moral wants of the rest of the country had hitherto diverted its attention from the older and less necessitous communities of the Northeast; but now that it had attained the vigor of a numerous and organized body, and had projected its comprehensive plans over all the rest of the land, it was deemed befitting that its quickening message should be heard among the venerable but languishing Churches of the Puritans.

Its movement in this new direction was rendered expedient by the undeniable condition of the New England Church.

The civil relations of the Church in these states had created other than spiritual motives for the profession of religion. None could hold office or vote, in her early days, unless he were a member of the Church. It would be superfluous to comment upon the inevitable influence of such a fact; religion becomes more a matter of form than of principle—a qualification for the state, for society, or for patronage in business, rather than a preparation for heaven—and pharisaism and hypocrisy are more likely to prevail than a sincere personal faith.

One of the highest authorities of the New England Church—the "venerable Stoddard"—published in a sermon, "That sanctification [holiness] is not a necessary qualification for partaking of the Lord's supper," and subsequently he wrote an "Appeal to the Learned, being a Vindication of the Right of Visible Saints to the Lord's Supper, though they be destitute of a Saving Work of God's Spirit in their Hearts." Though vigorously opposed, his views were adopted by his own people at Northampton, and prevailed extensively in New England. In the last mentioned work he defends the ministry of unconverted men, contending that they may rightfully execute the official functions of religion though destitute of its personal experience. It is well known that similar views existed throughout the Calvinistic Churches of the whole land. In the Presbyterian Church of the Middle States a majority of the Synod contended that all persons baptized, and not heretical or scandalous, should be allowed the Lord's supper; and that such persons, if educated for the purpose, should be admitted to the ministry. Regeneration they considered not ascertainable "by investigation, and not necessary to Church membership or the ministerial office." The Tennents and their coadjutors labored strenuously to reform these crude opinions, but against an opposition that distracted and rent the denomination for years. Gilbert Tennent's "Nottingham Sermon," on "The Dangers of an Unconverted Ministry"—a terribly scathing discourse—was occasioned by this opposition. He declares in it that "The body of the clergy are as great strangers to the feeling experience of the new birth as was Nicodemus." He and his associates were excluded from the synod the next year—the prime cause of what is called in the history of the Presbyterian Church "The Great Schism."

The Methodist ministry had to combat these defective and dangerous views through the length and breadth of the land.

They were not uncommon in New England. Dr. Chauncy, a prominent character among the Boston clergy, in writing against Whitefield's opposition to an unconverted ministry, declared that "Conversion does not appear to be alike necessary for ministers in their public capacity as officers of the Church as in their private capacity," and not a few clergymen and theological students acknowledged Whitefield as the instrument of their conversion. Whitefield said, "many, perhaps most, that preach, I fear, do not experimentally know Christ."[3] At the time of his third visit there were not less than twenty ministers in the vicinity of Boston who had been converted through his instrumentality after they had entered upon the sacred office, or their studies preparatory for it.[4] The author of "The Great Awakening" asserts this deplorable state of the New England Church. He says, "There were many in the Churches, and some in the ministry, who were yet lingering among the supposed preliminaries of conversion. The difference between the world and the Church was vanishing away, Church discipline was neglected, and the growing laxness of morals was invading the Churches. And yet never, perhaps, had the expectation of reaching heaven at last been more general and more confident."[5]

The devout-minded Edwards lifted up a standard for the remnants of the faithful. The providence of God directed the course of Whitefield among the decaying Churches, and Gilbert Tennent followed in his track. A widespread impression was produced. Revivals occur-

[3] Great Awakening, p. 104.
[4] Ibid, chap. ii, p. 393.
[5] Ibid.

red, attended with all those remarkable phenomena which in later years attended Methodism.

That the religious sensation of 1740 produced a permanent impression on the Calvinistic Churches of New England cannot be questioned; but they owe their later prosperity chiefly to later influences, and not a little to that general spirit of revival, that philanthropic activity and spiritual emulation, which all must acknowledge to have been coexistent with, if not consequent upon, the extraordinary outspread of Methodism through the country. The great revival of 1740 subsided. Owing to the fanaticism of Davenport and others, it was turned into reproach. The civil courts interfered unfavorably. A host of clergymen, with Chauncy, of Boston, at their head, arrayed themselves against it, opposing it through both the press and the pulpit. In 1743 the annual Convention of pastors in the Province of Massachusetts Bay issued their protest, ostensibly against its "errors," but actually against the revival; and, though opposed by a counter protest, their attack had an effectual influence on its subsequent history. Bitter controversies were rife; and when Whitefield arrived on his second visit, sick and prostrated by the voyage, he found the whole community in agitation. The contrast between this and his former visits is painfully affecting. The propriety of inviting him to the pulpits was discussed in the newspapers. A number of "Associations" published "Testimonies" against him. Some who had been among his most cordial friends were now among his bitter opponents. The faculties of both Yale and Harvard, where he had been received before with affectionate warmth, published "Declarations" against him, and it was obvious that a widespread revulsion had taken place. The change proceeded still further, until

we find at last Edwards, the luminary of the times, dismissed from his charge, the first scene of the revival, and the spiritual prospects of the New England Church beclouded by a general declension and settled gloom. In Boston itself, the number of parishes in 1785, five years prior to Lee's arrival, was actually less than a half century before.[6] Methodism felt that it had a work to do in such circumstances.

But further: Even in the best days of the Puritan Church it had failed to exalt the standard of Christian experience to what Methodists deemed its scriptural altitude. Though we meet in the New England theology with the phrase "Assurance of faith," yet that experience was supposed to be limited to a few anomalous cases, and, as a necessary sequence of the doctrine of election, was applied to the eternal as well as the present condition of the favored saint. The personal "knowledge of sins forgiven," as the common privilege of true believers, was denounced as presumption and heresy. Even the devout Edwards, in vindicating himself against his opponents, repelled the charge of teaching it. Methodism, with St. Paul, held this heresy as a most wholesome truth, and very full of comfort. Its people were taught never to rest satisfied with their spiritual experience till the Spirit itself should bear witness with their spirits that they were the children of God. It felt itself called upon to attempt to rectify the vagueness and superficiality of Christian experience in New England by supplying this deficiency in its theology.

Not only in regard to the *evidence* of personal religion, but more especially in regard to its *extent*, did it deem the New England theology deficient. That theology

[6] Episcopal Observer, Boston, 1846.

taught the necessary continuance of sin in believers through life. It interpreted St. Paul's personation of the awakened sinner under the law (Rom. vii, 7–25) as the necessary experience of saints under the evangelical covenant. This was, in the judgment of Methodism, a deplorable error, depreciative alike of the efficacy of the grace of God and the practical standard of the Christian life, and liable to perilous applications. Methodism, on the contrary, taught that men should "go on to perfection," not as a mere aspiration to an ideal virtue, the pursuit of what can never be attained, but as a legitimate and practical object of Christian faith. While it denied the possibility, in this life, of absolute, angelic, or Adamic perfection, or a perfection that admitted not of continued additions of grace—while it taught the necessary continuance of human infirmity and temptation to the end of the Christian pilgrimage, it nevertheless proclaimed the privilege of all saints to be delivered from all voluntary depravity. This high experience it considered to be what the New Testament Scriptures designate and enjoin as "Perfection," (Matt. v, 48; 2 Cor. xiii, 2;) meaning thereby, as has been shown, more a negative than a positive perfection—a perfection not according to the law, but according to the modified relation which believers sustain to the law under the evangelical covenant.

Methodism deemed, then, that it had a momentous message for New England in this respect.

It came also with the voice of remonstrance against some of the principal doctrines of the Puritan Church, which it deemed derogatory to the Gospel, and of dangerous practical consequence. Such were the tenets of Pre-election, Pre-reprobation, Final Perseverance, Infant Damnation, etc. We shall see hereafter that some of these were considered fundamental truths at the time of Lee's

visit to New England, and that some of his most serious, as well as his most ludicrous rencounters, arose from them.

Few forms of religious belief were more repulsive to the people of New England, at the time of the introduction of Methodism among them, than what is called Arminianism. It is curious to observe what distorted ideas of its doctrines were then current. The author of "The Great Awakening" says: "There was then a horror of Arminianism, such as is difficult now to understand. Men had not then forgotten the tremendous evils which had grown out of the doctrine of salvation by works. . . . The argument most constantly used against Arminianism, in those days, was its tendency to prepare the way for Popery. . . . There had been a gradual and silent increase of Arminianism. Scarce any would acknowledge themselves Arminians; but, in many places, the preaching more and more favored the belief that the unconverted might, without supernatural aid, commence and carry on a series of works preparatory to conversion; and that those who could do it were doing very well, and were in little danger." It is evident that the author of the work from which I quote is not himself exempt from similar objections to Arminianism. And yet no system of religious opinions can be more hostile than this to the very evils ascribed to it. From no passage in the works of Arminius can the "doctrine of salvation by works" be fairly deduced. It was a leading proposition of his system, that salvation is by faith; and that "true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will," but from the energy of the Holy Ghost.[7] The followers of Wesley teach the same. No modern Christians have proclaimed more

[7] See Watson's Theological Dictionary, and Bangs's Life of Arminius.

emphatically the doctrines of original sin, the exclusive merit of the atonement, justification by faith alone, and kindred tenets. They are reiterated every Sabbath in all Methodist pulpits. The alleged errors are not Arminian; they are Pelagian. Arminians have become Pelagians, but not from the legitimate tendency of Arminianism. Calvinists have often become Antinomians; but would the followers of Calvin hold themselves responsible for such a result? Yet it is believed by many to be the logical issue of their system; while no such relation can be asserted between Arminianism and Pelagianism. The capital difference between Calvinists and Methodists relates to the subject of unconditional election, and its necessary consequences, the final perseverance of the elect, and the reprobation of the non-elect. The only ground that the Calvinist has for alleging that Methodists teach "salvation by works" is the fact that they deny the tenet of unconditional election. But how does this denial logically involve the rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith, so pertinaciously attributed to Arminianism?

Methodism attempted the correction of these misapprehensions, and the attempt has not been unsuccessful. Prejudice has yielded to better information. The Calvinists of New England have seen that men can believe themselves sinners, and acknowledge the full merit of the atonement, without receiving the "horribile decretum," as it was properly named by Calvin himself. It is a fact which cannot be denied, that the Genevan theology is, to say the least, dormant in New England. Some still avow its doctrines, but they seldom receive a distinct enunciation in the public assembly. There is a universal conviction that the popular mind will not tolerate them; and this, too, be it remarked, not at a period

of spiritual declension, but of advanced religious interest. Methodism has had an agency in this change without doubt. It has scattered through New England thousands of laymen and hundreds of preachers, who glory in the doctrine of universal redemption. Their numbers and unrivaled activity have had effect. Thousands and tens of thousands have received, with gladness and devout praise, their enlarged views of the divine compassion of the Father and the atoning merit of the Son, and these views have begun to find utterance in all the pulpits of the land.

The entrance of Methodism into New England was eminently providential in another respect. The rigid theology of her old Churches was rapidly producing that disastrous reaction which has attended it in every other land. Rationalistic opinions and semi-infidelity had been germinating under its shade. They have grown and borne fruit since, but not to the extent they would had not a more benign creed been presented to the community. One of the most rigid organs of Puritanism declares that "The Unitarian apostacy has involved a large proportion of the Churches which were first organized by the first settlers of New England. In the Plymouth colony the original Churches were first in the apostacy, and the Church in South Marshfield is now the oldest Orthodox Church in that colony. And, in the Massachusetts colony, the six first in order, of the time of organization, have gone, and the Church in Lynn is now the oldest Orthodox Church of the Massachusetts colony. All that were established before it have despised their birthright, and are in hostility to the doctrines and religion of the Puritans and of the Reformation."[8]

[8] New England Puritan, September, 1842.

It is well known that all the Puritan Churches of Boston became infected with Arianism, until only one (the Old South) maintained a dubious acknowledgment of the Genevan faith.

It was the horror which the despondent doctrines of Calvin inspired that led to these remarkable changes, and we have reason to believe that Methodism has afforded an intermediate and safe ground for thousands who, in their revolt from Calvinism, would otherwise have passed over to the opposite and more perilous extreme.

Such were the circumstances which justified and demanded the introduction of Methodism into New England. That it did not mistake its mission has been demonstrated by the result. Besides its own prosperous growth, the Churches of the Eastern States are again alive, and their moral energies active for the salvation of the world. What agency has effected the change, under the divine Spirit? Has the existence of nearly a thousand preachers, traversing these states and ceaselessly laboring, and some hundred thousand laymen, proverbial for energy and zeal, been without effect on the public mind? Has it had no part, no highly important part, in the resuscitation of religion? Could such an agency operate anywhere, even in a heathen community, without important effect? What other special agency has operated meanwhile? The fact is unquestionable, that Methodism, with its preparatory labors of Whitefield, with its subsequent circuits and districts intersecting the whole land, its revivals, its innumerable class-meetings and prayer-meetings, its emphatic mode of preaching, and its assiduous pastoral labors, has aroused New England, provoking its Churches by its example. The assumption cannot be gainsayed. Not only is it matter

of history, but of sober and irresistible inference, that such universal and powerful appliances must have had effect, and extraordinary effect. Within view of almost every Congregational Church in New England, the successors of Lee have erected a temple whose altar has been habitually bedewed with the tears of the penitent and the purified. While Methodism has thus set an example to its predecessors, and provoked their zeal, it is a well-known fact that a large proportion of its converts have been gathered into their Churches, carrying with them more or less of its own energetic spirit.

But though thus justified by both the reasons and the results of its introduction into New England, its progress there has, from the beginning, cost untold exertions on the part of its ministry and people. Let us now proceed to trace these exertions more directly.

CHAPTER VI.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO NEW ENGLAND—CONTINUED.

Lee Enters New England — Preaches on the Highway at Norwalk — Cornelius Cook — Scenes at Fairfield — New Haven — Reading — Stratfield — Stratford — Vexatious Trials — Visit to Rhode Island — Cheering Reception — Preaches in the Court-House at New London — Returns to his Connecticut Circuit — The First Class in New England — Singular Treatment — Second Society Formed — Reflections — Third Class — Dr. Bangs — New Heralds Enter the Field — The First New England Methodist Ministry — Jacob Brush — His Labors — His Death — Daniel Smith — His Character — Description of his Preaching — Dr. George Roberts — Anecdotes — His Character — Triumphant Death.

Lee had been commissioned by the New York Conference of 1789 to introduce Methodism into New England. Its history, in the Eastern States, is, for the first two or three years, but his personal biography. He jotted down, in his journal, the incidents of his travels in hasty, unpolished sentences, most of them meager and dry, but time has rendered them profoundly significant. During the first year he was alone in the new field, and when others came to his help he left them to occupy the posts he had already established, while he himself went to and fro in all directions, penetrating to the remotest north-eastern frontier, preaching in private houses, in barns, on the highways, forming new circuits, and identifying himself with every advancement of the Church.

On the 17th of June, 1789, he preached his first sermon in New England at Norwalk, Conn. The difficulties he

encountered in the outset were characteristic of the community, and were met with his characteristic persistence. "Wednesday, June 17, I set off," he says, "to take a tour further in Connecticut than ever any of our preachers have been. I am the first that has been appointed to this State by the Conference. I set out with prayer to God for a blessing on my endeavors, and with an expectation of many oppositions." At four o'clock he arrived in Norwalk, and applied for a private house to preach in, but it was refused. He then asked for the use of an old deserted building in sight, but was again refused. He proposed to preach in a neighboring orchard, but was still repulsed. He took his stand at last under an apple-tree on the public road, surrounded by twenty hearers. "After singing and praying," he says, "I preached on John iii, 7, 'Ye must be born again.' I felt happy that we were favored with so comfortable a place. After preaching, I told the people that I intended to be with them again in two weeks, and if any of them would open their houses to receive me I should be glad; but if they were not willing, we would meet at the same place. Who knows but I shall yet have a place in this town where I may lay my head!"

It has generally been supposed that this was the first Methodist sermon preached in the town of Norwalk, or even the State of Connecticut, but Lee himself mentions the prior labors of Black, of Nova Scotia; and Cornelius Cook had preached in Norwalk about two years before Lee's arrival. Cook entered the itinerant ministry in 1787, and died of the yellow fever in New York in 1789. His career, though brief, was useful. His death was sudden, and he was buried with all his clothes on, and his money and watch in his pockets. He was not forgotten, however; his remains were disinterred, and one of his

fellow-laborers, long a patriarch of the ministry,[1] took his watch and carried it till the day of his death, as a memorial of his faithful friend.[2]

"Thursday, 18th," continues Lee, "I rode about sixteen miles, to Fairfield, and put up at Penfield's tavern, near the court-house, and soon told them who I was, and what my errand. I got a man to go with me to see two of the principal men of the town, in order to get permission to preach in the court-house. Then I went to the court-house, and desired the schoolmaster to send word, by his scholars, that I was to preach at six o'clock. He said he would, but he did not think many would attend. I waited till after the time, and no one came; at last I went and opened the door, and sat down." Chilling prospects, certainly, for a flaming mind like his, burning with the magnificent idea of founding in the Eastern States a new religious organization, which, in half a century, was to deck their surface with its chapels. Most men, placed in Lee's circumstances, as he sat solitary in the town-house, would have perceived in his project an absurdity as ludicrous as the grandeur of the design was sublime. But even here a ray of hope, at least, falls on him. "At length," he says, "the schoolmaster and three or four women came. I began to sing, and in a little time thirty or forty collected. Then I preached on Rom. vi, 23, 'For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' I felt a good deal of satisfaction in speaking. My soul was happy in the Lord. The

[1] Rev. Elijah Woolsey.

[2] Letter of Rev. W. C. Hoyt to the writer. Charles Wesley preached in Boston, on his way from Georgia to England, in 1736; Boardman preached in New England in 1772; and some of Garrettson's young preachers, on the Hudson, had ventured across the boundary line before Lee.

people were very solemn toward the end of the sermon, and several of them afterward expressed, their great satisfaction in hearing the discourse. After Mrs. Penfield came back to the tavern she pressed me much to call the next day and preach at her sister's, who, she said, was much engaged in religion, and would be much pleased with my manner of preaching. This appeared to be an opening of the Lord, so I told her I would. I stayed all night, and prayed with the family, who were very kind, and would not charge me anything, but asked me to call again."

The prospect brightens the next day. God had prepared for him a little band of congenial spirits, who had been praying and waiting for the arrival of such a message as he now bore to the East. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." Black, in his passage to Baltimore four years before, made an excursion into the interior, and penetrated as far as this part of Connecticut. He probably had no thought that in this transient visit he was preparing the way for the founder of Methodism in the East. The seed he casually scattered had, however, sprung up, and Lee was now welcomed by a few inquiring spirits who had been led, by the instrumentality of Black, to seek for a higher religious life than prevailed around them. Referring to the request of the lady just mentioned, he says: "Friday, 19th, I rode to Timothy Wheeler's, about four miles, and after delivering a letter to the woman of the house from her sister, Mrs. Penfield, she read it, and seemed much rejoiced that I had come. She then began to tell me how it had been with them, and said there were a few of them that met once a week to sing and pray together, but that they were much discouraged by their elder friends, and had been wishing and praying for

some one to come and instruct them, and seemed to believe that God had sent me. At length she said she was so rejoiced that her strength had almost left her, and sitting down, she began to weep. Mr. Black, one of our preachers, had been there a few years before, and some had been wishing for the Methodists ever since. They spread the news as much as they could, and at seven o'clock the people met, and I preached to an attentive congregation. After meeting, some of them stayed to talk to me about religion, and wished to be instructed in the ways of the Lord. I think five or six of them are truly awakened; one, I think, has experienced a change of heart; but those under distress would be often saying they were afraid they had never been awakened. I told them, if they saw that they were in danger of hell, and felt a desire to be born again, they might know that they were truly awakened."

On Sunday, 21st, we find him at New Haven, the Athens of the state. It was a stormy day, but he preached in the court-house, at five o'clock, to a considerable congregation, on Amos v, 6: "Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live." Among his auditors were the president of the college, many of the students, and a Congregational clergyman of the town. "I spoke," he says, "as if I had no doubt but God would reach the hearts of the hearers by the discourse. The people paid great attention to what I said, and several expressed their satisfaction. Wednesday, 24th, I traveled a stony road to Reading, where there was a school-house that I could preach in, so I made the appointment for the people at six o'clock. Having met at that hour, I preached on Isa. lv, 6: 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,' etc. I bless God that I had some liberty in speaking. The old minister,

at whose house I lodged is a great advocate for dancing, although he does not practice it himself."

It was at Reading that the second class formed by Lee in New England was organized before the end of the present year. Thence he rode to Danbury, and obtained permission to preach in the court-house twice on the same day. From Danbury he went to Ridgefield, where he was permitted to preach in the town-house. He also visited Rockwell, Canaan, Middlesex, Norwalk, Fairfield, and had some hope that an impression was made at each of these places.

On Friday, July 3d, he reached Stratfield, and found another little company of congenial and devout minds, whose sympathy cheered him in his solitary course. He says: "I preached at Stratfield, at the house of Deacon Hawley. It was filled with hearers. I had great satisfaction in speaking, and some of the people were melted into tears. I felt my soul transported with joy, and it appeared to me that God was about to do great things for the neighborhood. There are about a dozen that meet every week for the purpose of conversing on the subject of religion, and of spending some time in prayer. They desired me to meet with them in the evening, to which I consented. I spoke to them just as I would at one of our class-meetings, and it was a very comfortable time. The greater part of them kneeled down when we prayed; a thing that I suppose some of them never did before in public. They all seemed exceedingly pleased with the manner of the meeting; several thanked me for my advice, and desired me to remember them in my prayers."

The next day he was on his way to Stratford, the principal village of the town in which was formed, in less than a year, the first Methodist Society of his new cir-

cuit. Yet we find him approaching it with extreme misgivings: "Saturday, 4th, I set off about the middle of the day, and was much exercised about calling to preach at Stratford. Sometimes I seemed to have no faith; but at other times had a little hope that good might be done. At last I determined to take up my cross and make the trial. So I went, put up at a tavern, and calling on the man that kept the key of the town-house, obtained his consent to preach there. I let a man have my horse to ride through town and give the people notice of the meeting. At sunset they rung the church bell, and the people collected. The Congregationalists insisted on my going into the meeting-house, but I begged off for that time. I had a large company in the town-house. I preached on Ephesians v, 1: 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.' I was much assisted in speaking; I felt happy in the Lord, and comforted to see the people so attentive. When I was done Solomon Curtis came to me, asked me to lodge with him, and wished me to make his house my home. Another said he would conduct me to the house, and taking me by the hand, he walked all the way by my side. I don't know that I have had so much kindness showed me in a new place since I came to the state."

On the following day he was again at New Haven. The State-house bell was rung, and the people assembled there to hear him; but some influential citizens, having procured for him a Congregational chapel, induced him and his hearers to go into it. He proclaimed his message from the text, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." "In a little time," he says, "I felt the fire from above; my heart was warmed, and drawn out in love to my hearers. I felt great liberty toward the last, and some of the people dropped silent tears,

and the countenances of many showed that the word reached their hearts. I had two of the Congregational ministers to hear me: Mr. Austin, the minister of the house, and Dr. Edwards, son of the former President of Princeton College. After meeting I came out, and some told me they were much pleased with the discourse; but no man asked me home with him. I went back to the tavern, retired into a room, went to prayer, and felt the Lord precious to my soul. I believed the Lord had sent me there. If so, I was sure to find favor in the eyes of some of the people. In a little time David Beacher came, asked me to go home with him, and said he would be willing to entertain me when I came to town again. I went with him, and his wife was very kind." On Wednesday, the 8th, he was once more in Reading, and met there Rev. Mr. Bartlett, a pugnacious Congregationalist, who, with the spirit then, and still, to some extent, characteristic of New England, insisted upon vexatious questions of doctrine. "The minister," he writes, "and a few other people, came in, and wanted to enter into a conversation about principles, and inquired what kind of doctrines we held; but I said little to them. He asked me if I would be willing to take a text and preach my principles fully, for the people wanted to know them. I told him I was not willing to do it at that time, and intimated to him that if I preached I would wish to preach on a subject that I thought would be most for the glory of God and the good of the hearers; and that I did not believe a sermon on 'principles' would be for the glory of God at that time. The room was now quite full of people, and he asked me again, before them all, if I would preach upon my principles. I looked upon it, that he asked me before so many, that he might have it to say that I refused to let my principles be known, as too

bad to be heard; so I told him if I found freedom, I would on a future day appoint a time for the purpose, and preach fully on the subject. He observed that some of the people would come to hear me out of curiosity. Here some were offended because I preached the possibility of being suddenly changed from a state of sin to a state of grace."

On Wednesday, 29th July, he preached in Fairfield again. The next day he visited Dr. Dwight at his seminary in Greenfield. The doctor treated him with cool politeness, evidently doubting the expediency of his mission. August 5 he preached at Newfield, in the house of a liberal-hearted deacon, with much effect. He writes: "There has been a great deal said against us since I was here last week. One of their ministers told the people in public that the Methodists held damnable principles, etc. Thursday, 6th, I went to Mr. Well's, and a Calvinist came to converse with me for a while; after talking over our different sentiments we joined in prayer, and parted. Then I rode to Reading, about sixteen or seventeen miles. I have seldom traveled so bad a road on dry ground as that was. The day was uncommonly warm; sometimes I could hardly bear the steam that arose from my horse; and, poor creature, he sweated till my great coat, four double, and my saddle-bags, were wet through. When I got to Mr. Sanford's I felt very weary, but had only a little time to rest. In a few minutes I walked to Mr. Rogers's, and preached to a large number of people within and without doors. The people in this place can bear to hear any vice spoken against except dancing. Thursday, 13th, we rode to Fairfield, at an hour by sun. I preached on Proverbs xxiii, 13: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have

mercy.' I had some satisfaction in speaking to the people, and they were attentive to the word. But some of the inhabitants seemed to be afraid to hear, because the minister did not like my coming among them. Even the tavern-keeper and his wife, where I always put up, made an excuse to leave home before I came; and the reason, I understood, was that the minister complained of them for entertaining me."

Such instances of sectarian shyness, so characteristic of the period, were of almost continual occurrence, but he braved them with stout determination. He met with a repetition of them the next day, at Stratfield. "At four o'clock," he writes, "I preached on 1 Peter iii, 12. I felt an humbling sense of the goodness of God while speaking. Some heard with watery eyes. I hope God will soon revive his work in this place. After meeting I observed that some of the people who always spoke to me went away and took no notice of me; and no person gave me an invitation to his house, which was an uncommon thing, for formerly I had various invitations. But I understood that they had been buffeted by the ministers from the pulpit, and by their acquaintance in private, till they hardly knew what to do. One minister had been trying for two or three times, in his sermons, to prove that a man could not fall from grace; and another turned loose upon us and said from the pulpit there were six hundred of us going about the country, preaching damnable doctrines, and picking men's pockets. One of the deacons of the meeting did not like it; he advertised the minister in the public paper, and informed the public how he persecuted us. This noise is not without a cause. I hardly ever knew much persecution where the people were at ease in Zion. Sunday, 16th, we rode to Milford, and preached in the town-house, and endeavored to show

the necessity of a preparation to meet God. The house was crowded with people, and some of them appeared to be persons of note. They were very attentive to what was spoken, and tears stole down from several eyes, while solemnity sat upon their countenances. I felt great liberty in telling the people what it was to be prepared to meet God, and the comfortable consequence of such a preparation. I hope my labors will not be in vain in the Lord at this place. When I was done I came through the crowd, mounted my horse, and set off, without having any invitation to call at any man's house. This is the third time I have preached at this place, and have not yet become acquainted with any person. If I can but be useful I am willing to remain unknown among men. We then rode to Mr. Gilbert's, in New Haven. He and his wife appear to be God-fearing people."

This last example was certainly less offensive than the preceding cases, but could scarcely have occurred among any other Christian people than the excellent but frigid New England Calvinists of that day. Such treatment, chilling as it was, could not, however, damp the ardor of the evangelist. The next day he exclaims, "I bless God that he keeps my spirits up under all my discouragements. If the Lord did not comfort me in hoping against hope, or believing against appearances, I should depart from the work in this part of the world; but I still wait to see the salvation of the Lord."

Having spent about three months in Connecticut, and surveyed the ground for an extensive circuit,[3] to be occupied by assistants whom he hoped would come from the South to his aid, he departed on another exploring

[3] This first Methodist circuit in New England included Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, Milford, Reading, Danbury, Canaan, with some intermediate villages.

tour, which was attended with more agreeable auspices. "Monday, 31st of August," he writes, "I set out on a tour for Rhode Island State, and it was my fervent prayer to God, that if my undertaking was not according to his will, the houses of the people might be shut against me; but if my journey was right, that God would open the houses and hearts of the people to receive me at my coming." Both the hearts and the houses of the people were opened for him. He left New Haven after dinner, and had got but a little way from town before he fell in with a gentleman who was riding nine or ten miles on his route. He appeared to be a religious man, and encouraged Lee to go on to Guilford, and call on Lieutenant Hopson. He did so. Mr. Hopson met him at the gate, and as soon as he dismounted said to him, "I hope you are a brother in Christ." "I told him," writes Lee, "who I was, what I was, and whither I was going. It was then about sunset; but he sent word to his neighbors, and soon collected a room full of people, to whom I preached. I felt my soul alive to God among these strangers, and some of them wept freely. I found some lively Christians in Guilford of the Baptist persuasion, and could bless God that I came among them."

He passed on rapidly, preaching and making appointments at Killingworth, Saybrook, and Lyme, and on the third day of his tour entered New London, and "put up" at the house of Jonathan Brooks. "I told him," says Lee, "who I was, and that I had a desire to preach in the city at night. He immediately sent word among the people, and at night they collected at the State-house. My heart was much drawn out to God while I was declaring the necessity of the new birth. Deep solemnity rested upon the audience, and some of the dear hearers wept greatly. I felt as if I was among the faithful fol-

lowers of the Lord Jesus. My cry was, Surely God is in this place! I had a large company of people of different ranks and professions. Everything seems to prove that my journey is of God. O Lord, never let me blush to own thy name!" After he had spent about a week in sounding the alarm in Rhode Island, and opening the way for future laborers, he returned to the first scene of his travels in Connecticut. He thus records his feelings on concluding his excursion in Rhode Island: "I have found great assistance from the Lord of late. Sometimes I have had no doubt but that the word was owned and blessed of him. To-day I have preached four times, and felt better at the conclusion of my labor than I did when I first arose in the morning. I have found a great many Baptists in this part of the country who are lively in religion. They are mostly different from those I have formerly been acquainted with; for these will let men of all persuasions commune with them if they believe they are in favor with the Lord. I think the way is now open for our preachers to visit this part of the land. It is the wish of many that I should stay, and they beg that I would return again as soon as possible, although they never saw a Methodist before. I am the first preacher of our way that has ever visited this part of the country."

On Friday, the 25th, he preached at Stratfield. After the sermon he conducted "a kind of class-meeting," composed of about twenty persons. It was the first class-meeting held on the circuit, and led to the formation, the next day, of the first class, composed of three women, who, he says, "appeared willing to bear the cross, and have their names cast out as evil, for the Lord's sake."[4]

[4] This has been supposed to be the first Methodist class formed in Connecticut, (see Bangs's History of Methodism, anno 1789.) There were, however, before Lee's visit to New England, small classes at Stamford and Sharon, (letter of Rev. Aaron Hunt to the writer.) They were

The women who ministered to Christ were "last at the cross and first at the sepulcher." Let it ever be remembered that the first organic form of Methodism in New England, under the labors of Lee, consisted exclusively of devoted women. Their sex have ever since worthily sustained in the Church this first and peculiar honor. Among the Romans, senators and emperors were often the supreme pontiffs; but consecrated women, the vestal virgins, kept alive the undying fire.

Since his arrival in New England, three months of incessant labors and vexatious rebuffs had passed, and but three women were organized into the new Church, which was "to spread scriptural holiness over the land." But Lee had the faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and before its hopeful vision all the eastern hills and valleys stood forth white unto the harvest. He gave thanks, mounted his horse, the only companion of his laborious travels, and went forth to new trials and greater achievements.

The influence of the clergy and deacons in the several parishes which composed his circuit was used most strenuously to disaffect the people against him. At his next appointment, Greenwich, the prejudice thus excited was so general that he deemed it expedient to desist from further visits to it. There were about forty-five

connected with circuits in New York. "But it should be understood," writes our informant, "that those classes, or parts of classes, though in the borders of Connecticut, were by no means considered New England Societies. They were parts of Societies which existed within New York. It might be said that because Black and Garrettson passed through parts of New England, and preached in them, therefore Lee was not the pioneer of Methodism in this country; but the fact is, that not till the day of Lee did we enter that field to cultivate it." Lee really laid the foundations of Methodism in New England, and the classes at Stratfield and Reading were the first in the series of Societies which sprung from his labors.

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clergymen within the range of his circuit, most of whom seem to have been thoroughly alarmed at the solitary stranger. "They seem like frightened sheep," he writes, "when I come near them, and the general cry is, 'the Societies will be broken up.'" Accustomed as they had been to consider themselves the legalized Church of the land, they were astonished at his bold intrusion, and the standard of experimental religion was too low to admit of an appreciation of his message. The next insertion in his journal refers to the same obstacle, attended, however, by a different result. "Friday, 23d October. At David Olds's, in Weston, I preached to a large congregation. The house was much crowded, though it was very large. I suppose the reason why I had so many to hear me was owing to their ministers preaching against me two Sabbaths in succession. The people heard me with great attention, and many tears were shed. I had reason to praise God that I felt my soul happy in his love. I generally find, in this State, that when I am most opposed, I have the most hearers. The Lord seems to bring good out of evil. If my sufferings will tend to the furtherance of the Gospel, I think I feel willing to suffer; but if I had no confidence in God, and as many as at present to oppose me, I believe I should soon leave these parts. But once in a while I meet with something to encourage me, and by means of the grace of God I stand."

The persistent patience with which he almost daily brooked these peculiar and chilling rebuffs may well excite our admiration; but, in contrast with this hardihood of purpose, his journals abound in affecting expressions of thankfulness for the occasional indications of kindness he met, however humble they might be. After preaching at Fairfield, on a cold wintry night, December 24, he ex-

claimed, "To-night, thanks be to God! I was invited by a widow woman to put up at her house. This is the first invitation I have had since I first came to the place, which is between six and seven months. O my Lord, send more laborers into this part of thy vineyard. I love to break up new ground, and hunt the lost souls in New England, though it is hard work; but when Christ is with me, hard things are made easy, and rough ways made smooth."

Monday, the 28th of December, though in these prosperous times it may appear a "day of small things," was another signal period in the history of his mission—the date of the second Society formed by him in the State. "I preached," he writes, "in Reading, and found great assistance from the Lord in speaking. I felt that God was among the people. One or two kneeled down with me when we prayed. The lion begins to roar very loud in this place, a sure sign that he is about to lose some of his subjects. I joined two in Society for a beginning. A man who has lately received the witness of his being in favor with the Lord led the way, and a woman, who, I hope, was lately converted, followed." The former was Aaron Sandford, who afterward became a local preacher, and lived to see his children and many of his grandchildren members of the Church, with a large and influential Society gathered around him. His name has been represented by a son and a grandson in the Methodist ministry.

About seven months of indefatigable toil had passed, and but two classes, with an aggregate of five members, were formed. Reasoning from sight, and not by faith, the persistent preacher might well have despaired; but, "Glory be to God!" he writes, on forming this class of two members, "Glory be to God, that I now begin to

see some fruit of my labor in this barren part of the world." And he departed on his way to other toils, exclaiming again, "Glory be to God that he ever called me to work in his vineyard, and sent me to seek and to feed the sheep of his fold in New England. Sometimes I feel my heart so much drawn out in warm desires for the people that I forget my dear friends and relations; and if it were not for the duty I owe my parents, and the great desire they have to see me, I think I could live and die in this part of the world. The Lord only knows the difficulties I have had to wade through, yet his grace is sufficient for me. When I pass through the fire and water, he is with me; and rough ways are smooth when Jesus bears me in his arms." Fanaticism could never have sustained him amid such peculiar trials. It would have chilled and expired for lack of inspiration. He was supported by the consciousness that Methodism was needed in New England, and would, therefore, sooner or later, be divinely prospered; and by remarkable communications of grace and consolation from on high, such as he records, amid the inclemencies of a bleak wintry day, about this time, "I set out," he writes, "and my soul was transported with joy; the snow falling, the wind blowing, prayer ascending, faith increasing, grace descending, heaven smiling, and love abounding." On the 28th of January, 1790, he formed the third class of his circuit. "I preached," he says, "at Jacob Wheeler's, in Limestone, and after meeting formed a class, two men and two women. Perhaps these may be like the leaven hid in three measures of meal, that may leaven the whole neighborhood, and many may be brought to say, I will go with this people, because we have heard that God is with them."

By this time the whole state was rife with rumors of

him as a strange man who had come from the South, and was traveling through its villages on horseback, and in a costume of Quaker-like simplicity; a very "remarkable man," who preached every day and several times a day, and went everywhere, without knowing any person; exceedingly good-humored, witty even; of a most musical voice, making his hearers smile or weep as he pleased, but mostly weep; "holding forth" in the court-houses, the school-houses, sometimes in the more liberal village churches, but oftener under the trees of the highway; that he frequently lighted the court-house himself, and then rung the bell to call out the people; that the pastors and deacons valiantly resisted him as a heretic, for he was an Arminian; that they turned his discourses into interlocutions by their questions and disputations, but that he confounded them by his tact, if not by his logic; that he scattered the village wits or wags by his irresistible repartees; and that many drunkards and other reprobates were reformed, and many a good man, despondent under the old theology, was comforted by his refreshing doctrines. Many who liked his theology could not approve his preaching, because he acknowledged that he was not an "educated minister." The pastor, and sometimes the village lawyer or doctor, tested him with Latin and Greek phrases; he responded in Dutch, a knowledge of which he had picked up in his childhood; they supposed this to be Hebrew, and retreated, or took side with him as competent to preach. But above all, they saw that he was evidently an earnest and devout man. He prayed mightily, and preached overwhelmingly.

In one of the villages of Connecticut lived at this time an honest and intelligent blacksmith, who, when Lee appeared there, kept his family closely at home,

lest they should become infected with the itinerant's supposed heterodoxy. One of his sons, about twelve years old, heard of the arrival of the stranger. He was not allowed to hear him preach, but never forgot him nor the marvelous rumors of his ministry. He was destined to become Lee's greatest successor in this very field, and to do more important services for American Methodism than any other man recorded in its history, save Asbury. Such was Dr. Nathan Bangs's first knowledge of Methodism.[5]

He continued his untiring labors, journeying and preaching, without the aid or sympathy of a single colleague, until the 27th of February, 1790, when he received, at Dantown, the unexpected and joyful intelligence that three preachers were on their way to join him. After the preceding review of his solitary labors and struggles, we can appreciate the simple but touching description of their arrival, which he recorded at the time: "Just before the time of meeting a friend informed me that there were three preachers coming from a distance to labor with me in New England. I was greatly pleased at the report, and my heart seemed to reply, 'blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' When I saw them riding up I stood and looked at them, and could say from my heart, 'thou hast well done, that thou art come.' Jacob Brush, an elder, and George Roberts and Daniel Smith, two young preachers, came from Maryland, to assist me in this part of the world. No one knows, but God and myself, what comfort and joy I felt at their arrival. Surely the Lord has had respect unto my prayers, and granted my request."

He was holding a Quarterly Meeting, in a partly finished church, the second Methodist one begun in New

[5] Life of Bangs, p. 21.

England, at the time of the arrival of these brethren at Dantown. Mutually comforted and enlivened by the interview, they entered with renewed zeal upon their labors, and during the services the next day (Sabbath) "the power of the Lord," says a historian of Methodism, "was so manifested that many cried aloud for mercy; a thing so unusual in that part of the country that some were very much alarmed, and fled from the house in consternation; and others, who were in the gallery, jumped out on the ground. In the midst, however, of the confusion occasioned by these movements, those who had an experience of divine things rejoiced with exceeding great joy."[6]

Jesse Lee, Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith, memorable names in the records of the Church, were then, in the spring of 1790, the Methodist ministry of the Eastern States. There were more preachers than classes, and scarcely more than two members to each preacher; but they looked and labored for the future, and tens of thousands of New England Methodists now testify to the wisdom of their hopes.

Jacob Brush was an elder when he came to New England—the only one among the little band. Smith and Roberts were yet young men, and Lee, from diffidence of himself, had hitherto refused ordination. Brush was a native of Long Island. He entered the itinerancy in 1783, and was appointed to the Trenton (N. J.) Circuit.[7] The ensuing four years he labored extensively in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Leaving the Dover and Duck Creek Circuit, (Del.,) in the spring of 1790, to assist Lee, he continued in Connecticut till the New York Conference of October, 1790, when he was appointed to the New Rochelle Circuit, where he traveled,

[6] Bangs, anno 1790. [7] Minutes, 1785.

also the following year, till about the middle of July. He then took charge of a district which included Long Island, other portions of New York, and the State of Connecticut as far east as the Connecticut River, and as far north as the city of Hartford, sharing with Lee (who was presiding elder, the same year, of Boston District) the entire presiding eldership of New England. His labors in the East, while presiding elder, were limited to one year's superintendence of this large district. His district the following year was wholly in the state of New York. He was subsequently a supernumerary in New York city, till his death, in 1795. He was "an active man of God," say the old Minutes, "a great friend to order and union." Nothwithstanding a chronic inflammation of the throat, which interfered with his usefulness, he exerted himself much in his labors. His illness was very severe, and his last hours attended by stupor and loss of speech. A ministerial brother, taking him by the hand, inquired if he still enjoyed the peace of God; he affectionately pressed the hand of his friend, with an expression on his countenance of calm resignation. "We entertain no doubt," say his fellow-laborers, "that he rests in Abraham's bosom." [8]

Daniel Smith was born in Philadelphia, February 4th, 1769, and entered the ministry when he was about nineteen years of age.[9] We find him laboring, with a short interval, at Charleston, S. C., and at Lynn, Mass., thus making a transition of more than a thousand miles. In one of his passages he suffered shipwreck and came near losing his life on the Ocracock bar, off the coast of North Carolina. In 1791 he was admitted into full connection by the conference, and sent back to New England. In 1792 he was ordained an elder, and returned to the

[8] Minutes, 1796. [9] Richmond Christian Advocate, January, 1847.

South, where he continued to labor until 1794, when he is reported, in the Minutes, among those "who are under a location, through weakness of body or family concerns." We trace him no further in the annual records of the Minutes. He was signally useful while in New England. An excellent judge, who was accustomed to hear him, places him, with Jesse and John Lee, "in the first rank" of the early Methodist ministry.[10] Thomas Ware, himself a pioneer of Methodism in Western New England, records a remark of Asbury, that "Daniel Smith had a faster hold on the affections of the eastern people than any other preacher who had ever been sent among them." Ware classes him among the "eminent men" "whose memory was precious to many, and who were spoken of in terms of great respect and tenderness." Placing him by the side of the eloquent Hope Hull, who came to the East the next year, he says that "scarcely could two other men have been found so well suited to second the efforts of Lee in the Eastern States." "He was," says Enoch Mudge, "a man of an humble, sweet spirit, and a very good and useful preacher. No one of his time was more beloved. The people of Lynn, Boston, and vicinity, who knew him, were ardently attached to him. It was a day of weeping with us when he left Lynn. The general tenor of his preaching was experimental, winning, and affecting. He often was deeply affected with his own subjects, and with tears entreated sinners to be reconciled to God. His name is found among the most useful of the local preachers in New York for years."[11] On returning from the East, he was stationed, by Bishop Asbury, in the city of New York, where he applied himself to the study of the Hebrew tongue, under the late Dr.

[10] Letter of Rev. Enoch Mudge to the author.
[11] Letter to the author.

Kunze. He located in the city, and continued to minister with great acceptance to large congregations till the end of his life. He died on the 23d of October, 1815. His last sermon was preached in John-street, about a fortnight before his death. Ware, after speaking of Lee and Hope Hull in strong terms, remarks of Smith and his colaborer, Roberts, that "it was said of the most learned men in these parts that none could extemporize with either of these unassuming Methodist itinerants. When these people, who had seldom heard a sermon delivered without notes, found a man who could readily preach without a book, he became an object of their admiration. Smith and Roberts could command the attention and respect of any intelligent and sober audience, and frequently their admiration and love. The hearts and doors of many were open to them, and having through their instrumentality been made to know the blessedness of believing, they were received as the accredited messengers of heaven, and for them was felt a tie of affection stronger than the ties of blood." [12]

Dr. George Roberts's name was "like ointment poured forth" in the early Church; yet few records remain of his long and devoted life. He left among his papers not six lines respecting himself. After laboring for some time, with extensive usefulness, as an exhorter and local preacher in Talbot, Md., and adjacent counties, he joined the traveling ministry in 1790. His first appointment was on Annamessex Circuit, Md., but he left it the same year to accompany Daniel Smith to New England, where he continued until the autumn of 1796, laboring indefatigably four years, at least, on extensive districts, as a presiding elder. His first district (1793–94) was the only one at the time in Connecticut, if we except a compara-

[12] Letter in the Richmond Christian Advocate, January, 1847.

tively small tangent, reaching to one or two appointments from a district which lay chiefly in the state of New York and was traveled that year by Thomas Ware. His next scene of labor (1794–95) was a vast district, comprising nearly the whole state of Connecticut, and extending into Rhode Island on the east, and to Vermont on the north. His district in 1795–96 lay mostly in the state of New York, but reached into Connecticut, and included the Reading Circuit. This year terminated his labors in New England. His subsequent appointments were respectively in the city of New York, (where he continued three years,) Annapolis, Md., Baltimore, (two years,) Philadelphia, (two years,) Baltimore again, after which he located (1806) in the latter city, where he continued till his death in the practice of medicine, an eminently devoted, influential, and useful citizen and local preacher. He was especially useful in New England by his diligence in organizing and disciplining societies. While his labors were thus onerous, he also shared fully with Lee and his other coadjutors in the privations and sufferings incident to their new field. "I once heard him say," writes his son, "that during the whole period of his labors in New England he never received over forty dollars per annum from any source, circuits and conference dividends together. He never had more than one suit of clothes at once. I still have in my possession the thread and needle-case which he used in mending his garments, with his own hands, in the woods, or behind a rock. On one occasion Bishop Asbury punched his saddle-bags with his cane, and said, 'Brother Roberts, where are your clothes?' His reply was, 'On my back, sir. I am ready to go whenever and wherever you please to direct, without returning to any appointment to gather up my garments.' He accom-

panied the bishop, piloting him through New England, in his first visit to that portion of our country. Often has he entertained me with relations of the many feats and numerous obstacles of his New England mission." [13]

The person of Dr. Roberts was large and athletic, his manners exceedingly dignified, and, in social life, relieved by a subdued cheerfulness. To his dignity, which well befitted his noble person, was added, in the pulpit, a most impressive power of persuasion. His sermons were systematic and digested, and in their application often overwhelming. Wherever he went, his presence at once commanded respect. The infidel and the scorner grew serious, or shrunk from before him, in either the public congregation or the conversational circle. A reckless skeptic once attempted, with the air of a champion, to engage him in a difficult discussion, in presence of a company of friends. Roberts heard him for several minutes without uttering a word, but as he advanced in his scornful criticisms the listening preacher's countenance and whole bearing assumed an expression of solemn scrutiny, which struck the bystanders with awe and made the skeptic quail. When he had concluded, Roberts placed his hand on the infidel's breast, and with a look of irresistible power exclaimed, "Sir, the conscience which God has placed within you refutes and confounds you." The rebuked scoffer trembled and fled from his presence. The fact illustrates, better than could pages of remark, the character of this mighty man of God. He was not destitute of wit on befitting occasions, and when used satirically, it had redoubled pungency from its contrast with his generally serious character. "He was a powerful and very successful preacher,"

[13] Letter to the author.

writes one of his ministerial cotemporaries.[14] While he traveled in Connecticut, the Rev. Dr. Williams, of Tolland, and Rev. Mr. Huntington, of Coventry, unitedly published a work against the new sect, in which they charged Asbury with duplicity, and many other equally unchristian traits. Roberts replied to them in a pamphlet of peculiar force. "I still recollect," says the last mentioned authority, "some of his severe sallies. He was a man of much native wit and of a ready tact at satire, when he had occasion for it." He wrote, also, while in New England, a pamphlet on the Calvinistic controversy, which produced an impression on the opinions of the period.

His location was rendered necessary by the magnitude of his family, and was a matter of profound regret to him. He continued, however, to labor zealously in the local ministry till his death. His end was sublime, a scene of extreme physical anguish, of mental vigor coming forth with renovated power from successive shocks of dissolution, and of spiritual triumph never, perhaps, surpassed in the history of man. "For twenty-four hours prior to his death, he had," writes his son, "a most violent convulsion every ten minutes by the watch; and for twenty-four hours preceding the last day, he had them every half hour. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that he came out of each with his intellect apparently more vigorous than when it seized him. During the intervals he shouted aloud, almost every moment, the praises of redeeming grace. This fact was the more striking, from the consideration of his not having been known to exult much during his previous life. He was distinguished by the evenness and quiet of his temperament. A night or two previous to his

[14] Rev. Asa Kent to the author.

dissolution I urged him to spare himself, and offered as a reason for it the possibility of his disturbing the neighbors. He immediately replied, "Be quiet, my son? be quiet, my son? No, no! If I had the voice of an angel, I would rouse the inhabitants of Baltimore for the purpose of telling the joys of redeeming love. Victory! Victory! Victory though the blood of the Lamb!' 'Victory through the blood of the Lamb!' was the last sentence that trembled on his dying lips."

Such were Jesse Lee's colleagues in the spring of 1790. We have seen his joy as he "saw them riding up" at Dantown, and welcomed them with the benediction, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Scarcely had they arrived when he commenced new journeys and labors.

CHAPTER VII.

LEE AND HIS COLABORERS IN NEW ENGLAND, 1790–91.

Excursion to Wethersfield — Labors at Hartford — Visits Farmington — Interest for "Principles" — Forms the New Haven Circuit — Excursions — Passes through Rhode Island — Unexpected Meeting with Garrettson — Tour of the Latter — "Black Harry" — Lee arrives in Boston — Preaching Excursion — Returns to Boston — Departs for the Conference — Reflections — His Success in the East — Plan of Labor for the ensuing Year — View of the old Circuits — Dr. Roberts — John Bloodgood — John Lee — Nathaniel B. Mills — Henry Christie — Lee's return to New England — Boston — Trials — Lee's Wit: Note — Goes to Lynn — The First Methodist Society in Massachusetts — Erection of the First Chapel — Lee returns to the Conference at New York — Results.

Immediately on the arrival of his colleagues, Lee departed to survey new fields of labor. A part of Connecticut, and all the eastern and northern sections of New England, were yet unentered by the Methodist ministry. Cheered by the arrival of fellow-laborers, and accompanied by one of them, he started for these remoter regions. On Wednesday, March 3d, he says that Smith and himself set out to the eastward, leaving Brush to supply his two-weeks' circuit. Sunday, 14th, we find him preaching at Wethersfield, in the North Brick School-house. "Some of the people," he remarks, "sensibly felt what I said, and tears ran down from their eyes. Glory be to God, that we were favored with the presence of Him who walked in the fiery furnace with his children. O that the Lord may revive his work in this place! Here we met with a couple of old friends from Hartford, Mr. Thomas Hildrup and Mr. Coop, who

rejoiced to see us on our way to their city. They informed us that the Lord was reviving his work in Hartford. My soul rejoiced at the glad tidings, and I was ready to say, 'Lord, we are well able to go up and possess the land.' I went on to Hartford, and put up at Mr. Winship's, a private lodging prepared for me by my two friends. I was informed that several persons were awakened by my preaching when I was there before. The hearing of this humbled my soul in the dust, and strengthened my faith. Ah, Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst own my labors and comfort my soul? Not unto me, not unto me, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory. At two o'clock they rang the bell, and we met in the State-house. I preached on 1 Thess. v, 19. I had a large company of hearers to speak to; and, glory be to God for his goodness to me while preaching his word! I felt my soul happy in the Lord; the people heard with great attention, and with many tears. I felt as if the word had taken hold of the hearts of the hearers. The comfort I had at this meeting was worth more than all the pleasures of this poor world."

At night he was again sounding the alarm in the State-house. The next day he spent in visiting "from house to house." In the afternoon he held an inquiry or class-meeting with some persons who came to talk of "the form and power of godliness;" but, "according to the New England custom, we spent," he says, "a little time in talking about principles, especially the probability of men being lost after they are converted to God. We met again, at night, in the State-house, where I preached on John xvi, 20. I felt great freedom from first to last. My eyes were often filled with tears, and sometimes I could hardly keep from weeping aloud. My soul fed upon the word, while I

was endeavoring to feed the flock of God. We had more people in the State-house this night than had ever been seen there on any occasion. They were very solemn and attentive; many of them were deeply affected, and wept bitterly under the word. It appeared to me that God was opening the way for us to be received by, and greatly blessed to, the people. After we broke up several persons came and spoke to me, and begged my prayers. It has often been my prayer of late, that if our undertaking in visiting these parts were according to the will of God, he would open the houses of the people to receive us, and their hearts to receive our instructions. Here my prayer is visibly answered. We have repeated invitations to call upon and lodge with the people; and they earnestly request our prayers, attend our ministry, and desire our advice. My heart is drawn toward the people in the East. If the Lord opens the way before me, I think I shall visit them shortly."

The day following he was at Farmington, where he met another instance of New England interest for theological "principles." He was entertained by a Mr. W. "We had been there but a little time before the old man began to talk about principles, and the old lady to prepare dinner. We continued the discourse till we had dined. When the old man found out that we believed a person might fall from grace and be lost he discovered a good deal of anger, and said, 'If David had died in the act of adultery, and Peter while swearing, they would have been saved.' 'Then,' said I, 'after a man is converted he is obliged to be saved; he can't help it.' 'Yes,' said he, 'he is obliged to be saved, whether he will or not, for it is impossible for him to help it.' He said he would as soon hear us curse God at once, as to hear us say that God would give his love to a person

and then take it away. I told him God would never take it away, but we might cast it away. Seeing he was much ruffled in his temper, I thought it best to be moving; so we asked him the way to Mr. Coles's, but he would not tell us, for he said Mr. Coles would not like his sending such men to his house. However, we got directions from his wife, and then set out. I shook hands with the old man, and told him I hoped God would reward him for his kindness."

He passed on to Derby, where, hiring the bell-man to ring the people out, he addressed them, and departed to preach at Milford. Thence he passed to New Haven, where he preached on Sunday. Besides the Stamford or Reading Circuit, where he had labored at first, he had now formed the New Haven Circuit, extending over a hundred and twenty miles, and comprising three cities, five thickly-settled towns, and several smaller places. This range of travel and labor was to be compassed every fortnight by the tireless itinerant. It has since become a most prosperous field of Methodism. A writer, who labored in it during 1832, says that the New Haven District at the latter date was almost entirely composed of Lee's two-weeks' circuit; it contained at this time fifteen circuits and stations, employed thirty-four traveling preachers, had between thirty and forty local preachers, nearly fifty chapels, and nearly six thousand Church members.[1]

He spent about two weeks more in traversing Connecticut. On Saturday, April 17, he penetrated into Windham County, Vermont, where he stayed two days, and passing through a portion of New Hampshire, entered Massachusetts. He records "many discouragements,"

[1] Letter of Rev. Heman Bangs, in Christian Advocate and Journal, November 23, 1832.

and "not so much satisfaction in Massachusetts as in Connecticut." On the 10th of May he was again in the latter state, preaching, and consoling himself with his colaborer, George Roberts, at Middletown. He traveled to and fro, proclaiming daily the word of life, until the latter part of June, when he set his face toward the East. On his route he delivered two discourses at Norwich, and thence passed to New London, where he preached several times with much comfort. Thence he went to Stonington, where he delivered his message, and entered Rhode Island. In the latter state he preached respectively at Newport, Bristol, Warren, and Providence. At Warren he was cordially admitted to the pulpits of other denominations, and treated with much kindness. In Providence he preached five times in a private house, and several times in the court-house.

He left Providence for Boston. When about ten miles on his way, his attention was suddenly arrested by a sight as astonishing to him, in his peculiar circumstances, as a supernatural apparition could well have been. He saw at a distance on the road two men on horseback habited with the simplicity of Methodist preachers, and accompanied by that invariable symbol of the early itinerancy, the now obsolete saddle-bags. One of these horsemen was an intelligent but humble-looking colored man, who seemed to enjoy his position more than if he were attending a hero in a triumph; the other was a man of small but robust stature, neatly clad, of benignant aspect, and presenting to Lee's eye a startling resemblance to one of his old companions in the itinerant labors of the South. They appeared dusty and weary, as if they had journeyed far during the day. Lee quickened his pace, halted before them, and was soon clasping with delight the hand of his former friend and fellow-laborer, Free-

born Garrettson. His colored companion was the well known "Black Harry," who not only ministered to the temporal convenience of his master, but aided in his spiritual labors by frequently exhorting and preaching after him. The meeting of the two evangelists on the highway was too remarkable not to attract attention; a spectator approached them, and perceiving their character, and affected by their spirit, invited them to partake of his hospitality and preach at his house in the evening. Such interviews were too rare and too refreshing in that day not to be relished by the weary itinerants. They accepted the invitation, preached that night and the next morning in the house of their host, and tarried till after dinner in comforting conversations and devotions. Let us leave them there while we trace the eastern excursion of Garrettson, which thus brought him upon the path of Lee.

On his return from Nova Scotia, in 1787, he passed through Boston, where he found three persons who had been members of the Society which was formed there by Boardman. The Society had expired for lack of pastoral care. Garrettson preached several sermons in private houses, and departed to the South, not, however, without the purpose of future efforts for the city. After laboring some time in Maryland, he started on his way to New England, in May, 1788; but on arriving at New York he was induced by Asbury to lead the pioneer expedition up the Hudson. He was thus prevented from anticipating Lee in the labor and honor of founding Methodism in New England. He kept a steady eye upon it, however, especially upon Boston, and in 1790, while yet superintending the Northern district, he started on his present excursion to the Eastern metropolis.

He entered the north-western angle of Connecticut at

Sharon, on the 20th of June, accompanied by "Harry," and preached under the trees to about one thousand people. "I was much drawn out," he says, "and great attention was paid to the word. The devil strives very hard to hinder the spreading of the Gospel in this town; but, blessed be God! many are under awakenings, and I think the kingdom of Satan will be greatly shaken. On Wednesday, 23d, he reached Litchfield, and was surprised to find the doors of the Episcopal church open, and a large congregation waiting for him. He discoursed from "Enoch walked with God," and believed good was done. He left Harry to preach another sermon, and went on to the center of the town; the bell rang, and he preached to a few in the Presbyterian meeting-house, and lodged with a kind Churchman. The same day "I preached," he says, "in the skirts of the town, where I was opposed by ——, who made a great disturbance. I told him the enemy had sent him to pick up the good seed; turned my back on him, and went on my way." On Friday, 25th, he rode through a storm of rain some fourteen miles, and declared to a large assembly, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." The power of God was manifest among the people; "several," he writes, "were in tears, and there was a shaking among them." He had now penetrated far enough into New England to meet with its peculiarities, especially that pugnacious interest for "principles" which Lee and his associates had so generally startled. The village squire, accompanied by a phalanx of grave townsmen, came forth to converse with him on the, to them, vital points of unconditional election and reprobation, the freedom of the will, and perseverance. The discussion was held far into midnight, when the assailants, "much shaken," found it convenient to retreat. "We have hard work," he says, "to

plant what they call Arminianism in this country. We stand in need of the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove." On the 28th he reached Hartford, and preached to five or six hundred people in the court-house. They gave respectful heed to the words which were spoken by himself; but Harry, who attempted, as usual, to exhort after him, was received "very uncivilly." On the 30th they arrived at Worcester, "where," he says, "I was kindly entertained by Mr. Chanler, but the people appeared to have a small share of religion. I went from one end of the town to the other and could get no one to open the court-house and gather the inhabitants." The next day (July 1st) he entered Boston, after riding forty-eight miles. "I boarded Harry," he says, "with the master mason for the Africans, and I took my own lodgings with a private gentleman, who had been a Methodist in England, but has, I fear, fallen from the spirit of Methodism. Sunday, 4th, I attended church in the morning. In the afternoon I preached in a meeting-house which had formerly belonged to Dr. Mather. Monday evening, likewise, in the same place. Tuesday I went from end to end of the town, and visited several who were friendly, a few of whom were formerly Methodists, but I fear they are not such in practice. I engaged the use of the meeting-house, and a place for a preacher to board, and on Wednesday set out for Providence." On his way thither, as we have seen, he met Lee, who himself was journeying to the metropolis of the East. On parting from Lee, the next day after this unexpected meeting, he directed his course to Providence, where he had an opportunity, the same evening, of preaching in "good old Mr. Snow's meeting-house." The following day he preached there again to a larger congregation than the night before

On Sunday he officiated all day for "good Mr. Snow," beginning at six o'clock A.M. Harry also found himself at home among the cordial people of Snow's charge, and honorable amends were made him for his discourteous reception at Hartford; he "held forth," at six o'clock P.M., in the meeting-house, to more than a thousand people. The next morning Garrettson was up and preaching to several hundred hearers at five o'clock, and in a few hours after was on his way westward. "I had," he says, "a sweet time in Providence. I have no doubt but the Lord begun a good work in many hearts. I left many in tears. I left town about nine o'clock, rode about thirty-five miles, and lodged at Colonel P.'s, whom I found to be a very kind man, and I trust the family were stirred up. The daughter seemed to be much affected." Tuesday, 13th, he rode forty-five miles to Hartford, and "preached," he says, "the next evening to as ill-behaved an audience as I have ever seen in New England. The people of this place, with a few exceptions, seem to be fast asleep in the arms of the wicked one." The following night he preached again, and "some of what are called the gentry," he remarks, "behaved so ill that I was under the necessity of breaking up the meeting and declining to preach by candle-light."

Methodist itinerants, in those times, were not to be defeated by popular violence; the next day he was preaching again in the state-house. On Saturday, 24th, he preached at Cornwall. "I found," he says, "that the Lord had begun a blessed work in this town when I preached here before, so I rode to Canaan, where I was comfortable." He had now reached the neighborhood of his district. Harry, especially, began to feel more "comfortable." On Sunday, 25th, Garrettson preached in Canaan. "The Lord was with us," he exclaims; "the

work in this place is moving on. I have circulated a subscription for the building of a church here. Brother Bloodgood was with me. As it was too warm in the house I preached in the open air. Harry preached after me with much applause. I rode in the afternoon and preached in Salisbury, in a part of the town in which I had never before been, and I think I have never seen so tender a meeting in this town before, for a general weeping ran through the assembly, especially while Harry gave an exhortation. The Lord is carrying on a blessed work here." By the 29th he was on his district at Hudson, where, to gratify the public curiosity, he had to give place to Harry, who was heard by different denominations with much admiration, and who, the Quakers believed, preached "by immediate inspiration."

On parting from Garrettson, Lee pressed forward to Boston, where he arrived on the 9th of July. The impression produced by the brief visit of the former had already evanesced. The day was spent in useless attempts to procure a place, public or private, for preaching; "every expedient failed." But not discouraged, he took his stand, as we have seen, on the Common the next day and delivered his message to three thousand people. As the way seemed not yet open for him, he left the city the following day, to survey yet more extensively his eastern field.

"He rode," says his biographer, "to Salem, and preached, in Mr. Joshua Spalding's pulpit, to a large company of attentive hearers. Thence he passed through Ipswich to Newburyport, and, according to direction, called on Rev. Mr. Murray. When Mr. Murray found out that he belonged to Mr. Wesley's connection, he very politely offered to treat Mr. Lee as a gentleman and as a Christian, but not as a preacher; he could not let him

occupy his pulpit. His apology was, that he had been informed by letter that a preacher of the Wesleyan party had lately been up the Connecticut River, and that he had held meetings in four different places in one day. Lee informed him that he was the man who had been guilty of that crime. But, though not successful in getting Murray's pulpit, he succeeded, after much exertion, in obtaining the court-house, at which place he appointed preaching on his return. From Newburyport he proceeded to Portsmouth, then the metropolis of New Hampshire. Here he preached to a solemn and attentive congregation, and some were truly thankful for his visit. He returned to Newburyport, where he found, that though he had obtained leave of the selectmen to preach in the court-house when there before, yet even in a few days three of them had changed their minds and were inclined to keep him out of it. However, in the evening the congregation assembled, and one of the selectmen being present, opened the door, and he addressed a company of well-behaved people, some of whom were melted into tears. Fearing lest they should form some objection to his preaching there in future, he resolved to make sure of one more time, and appointed to preach at the same place the next morning at six o'clock. Morning preaching was a new thing there, but he had a great many out, and had reason to hope that many were profited by hearing, while he was blessed in speaking. After preaching at Salem and Marblehead he rode to Boston and preached to about three thousand people on the Common. "Blessed be God!" he exclaims, "he made his quickening presence known, and met us in the field." During the last week he had traveled at least one hundred and thirty miles, made his own appointments, and preached nine times.

In this, his second visit to Boston, he not only preached on the Common, but also in a private house; and, on one occasion, in a meeting-house belonging to the Baptists, which had been vacant. He also went to Charlestown, "where he preached in a private house, and had reason to believe that many felt the weight of what was spoken." On the ensuing Sabbath he was again upon the Boston Common, addressing a much greater multitude than on the two former occasions. Although there had been a considerable fall of rain that day, and the earth was quite wet, he calculated that there were not less than five thousand present.

Having surveyed his new sphere of labor in the East, he departed on his way to the next Conference, in New York city. He passed through Connecticut, preaching at Enfield, Hartford, Middlefields, etc. At the latter place a Quarterly Meeting was held for the New Haven Circuit—the one founded by him immediately before his departure for Boston—and a society of six members was organized.

More than sixteen months had elapsed since his appointment to New England, about nine of them without the support of a single colleague. After traveling through portions of Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, proclaiming the word of life in fields, court-houses, private houses, and churches, by day and by night, and surmounting obstacles from which most men would have recoiled in disgust or despair, he departs to the Conference with the following reflections: "Here I may stop and look back on the year that is past. But when I consider the many dangers I have passed through, the many mercies I have received, and the many moments I have not improved, I stand amazed at myself, and astonished at the goodness

of God to me. It is now sixteen months and eight days since our last Conference, and in this time I have traveled several thousand miles, and preached in six states, and in chief part of the large towns in New England. In most places I have met with a much kinder reception than I could have expected, among persons holding principles so different from mine; yet I have been much opposed, and have been under the disagreeable necessity of spending much of my time in talking on controverted points, sometimes in public, and often in private. When opposed, if I discovered an inclination to waive the discourse, they would immediately conclude my principles were so bad that I was afraid to let them be known. For this reason I have been led to debate the matter, with most of those who have spoken to me, with a calm spirit. I have had generally quietness of mind while conversing on doctrinal points, and oft-times seemed to be immediately assisted from Heaven; answers have been put in my mouth, that were not familiar to me, when strange questions have been asked. I have been enabled to go through all my hardships with great satisfaction, have been much blessed with the people, and the Lord has given me to see visible fruit of my labors, in the awakening and conversion of some precious souls."

On Monday, October 4, 1790, he entered the Conference in New York city, to solicit additional laborers for New England. What could he report of his services, since he left the same body, in June of the preceding year? A tale of as hard fare and as hard labors, doubtless, as any one there could relate, except possibly the venerable man who sat in the chair—the unequaled Asbury. But not of toils and trials alone could he speak; much had been achieved. Connecticut, Rhode

Island, and Eastern Massachusetts had been thoroughly surveyed, for more definite plans of labor. He himself had proclaimed the principles of Methodism in all the five New England States.[2] He had removed much prejudice, and put the whole country more or less in expectation of further efforts. Prior to his departure from Connecticut to Boston he had formed definitively two circuits, Stamford, or Reading, as it was afterward called, and New Haven, and subsequently the general outlines of another, in Eastern Massachusetts. His fellow-laborers had also extended their travels in many directions, so that five circuits were recorded on the Minutes at the Conference of 1790. Nearly two hundred souls had been united in classes; a remarkably large number, if we consider the formidable obstacles which obstructed every movement of the few laborers in the field. Two chapels, at least, had been erected; one in the parish of Stratfield, town of Stratford, by the society of Weston, (now Easton,) called *Lee's Chapel:* the first Methodist one built in New England;[3] the second, in Dantown, partially built, when Lee welcomed into it his newly arrived assistants on the 27th February.

Such were the results, thus far; and with these for his arguments, he could not fail to intercede successfully for his new field. He spent three hours in a private interview with Asbury, discussing its claims. That good and far-seeing man not only complied with his wishes, so far as to dispatch with him additional laborers, but resolved

[2] Maine was not then a state, but a province of Massachusetts.

[3] Letter of Rev. H. Huested, of Connecticut, to the writer. Bangs (Hist., vol. i, book 3, chap. ii,) places this chapel in Weston, (now Easton.) The error arose probably from the fact that the society which built it have since removed to a new edifice in that town.

to visit the Eastern States himself in the course of the ensuing year.

In the following schedule of the appointments made at this Conference for New England, we have an outline of the field of Methodism within its limits: Jesse Lee, Elder; Fairfield, John Bloodgood; New Haven, John Lee; Hartford, Nathaniel B. Mills; Boston, Jesse Lee, Daniel Smith. Besides these circuits, under the nominal supervision of Lee, (for such only we shall find it to have been,) there was the Litchfield Circuit, Conn.,[4] traveled by Samuel Wigton and Henry Christie, and included in a district which lay mostly within the State of New York, under the presiding eldership of Garrettson. One district and part of a second, five circuits, and seven preachers, constituted, then, the ministerial arrangements of Methodism for New England, during the ecclesiastical year 1790–91.

The Litchfield Circuit had been formed about the beginning of the spring of 1790, and comprehended the north-western section of Connecticut; the Hartford Circuit, in the latter part of the same season, and "took in both sides of the Connecticut." It included Wilbraham, Mass., Tolland, Hartford, Windsor, Suffield, Granby, Enfield, Winterbury, Middletown, etc. Fairfield designates what was, at first, named the Stamford Circuit. It has already been described, as also that of New Haven, which "extended along the post-road from Milford to Hartford."

The name of George Roberts does not appear on the roll of the little itinerant corps, but is put down for Annamessex, Md., though he had arrived in New England more than seven months before the session of the Conference in New York which terminated the ecclesias-

[4] Lee's Hist., anno 1790.

tical year, and therefore preceded the publication of the Minutes. He continued, however, in the East, and his name appears in the list of New England appointments for the next year.

John Bloodgood, who is recorded for Fairfield this year, was received into the Conference on probation in 1788. In 1789 he traveled Columbia Circuit, N. Y., whence he passed to Fairfield, Conn., in 1790. The next year he was appointed to Lynn, Mass., as colleague of Daniel Smith. In 1792 his name appears in the Minutes among the elders, but we find no intimation whatever of his appointment. In 1793 he traveled the Annapolis Circuit, Md. Except the year 1803, when he accompanied Dr. Thomas Lyell to the East, and was appointed with him to Boston and Lynn, he continued in the Middle States, occupying important circuits and stations—among them Baltimore city several times—until 1809, when he was returned as located in the Baltimore Conference. His labors at Annapolis and on Harford Circuit were attended by great revivals. While on the latter, he received into the Church the late Dr. Thomas Bond, who says that in personal appearance he was imposing—"tall, well-formed, straight as an arrow, with a fine complexion, good symmetrical features, and especially a quick and penetrating eye; he appeared to great advantage in the pulpit. I think he wore a wig, which took off something from the appearance which his real age would have given; and in his dress he was remarkably particular; not at all foppish, but always neat, to the tie of his neckerchief, and his clothes-brush was held in daily requisition. His mental endowments were good, but his acquirements did not correspond with his capacity. His education was restricted to the rudiments commonly taught in country schools in his time. My father's house

was a preaching place, and Mr. Bloodgood had a regular appointment there every other Sabbath, in the afternoon. Monday was a resting day, and was spent at my father's. On Tuesday there was preaching at Mr. George Garrettson's, brother of the venerable Freeborn Garrettson. Earnest, with an evident exhibition of a deep self-conviction of the truths he delivered, and a feeling of the importance of the exhortations he gave, confining himself to the common topics, he found direct access to the consciences and the hearts of his hearers, and turned many to righteousness. The revival of 1800, perhaps, exceeded anything which had ever been known in the Church, both in the rapidity of its spread, and the number and variety of its subjects. The whole Church partook of it, and in some places it promised a universal turning of the people from Satan unto God. Everywhere you went, even in the depth of winter, the woods were made vocal with the songs of Zion; the children, as they went to school, people on the road, or in the forest felling the timber, or procuring fuel, all, and always, were singing the hymns and spiritual songs which were sung at Methodist meetings; and every prayer-meeting appointed, whether the preachers were present or absent, was crowded with souls rejoicing in hope, or inquiring for the way of life. Under such circumstances such a man as John Bloodgood could but be in his element. Rest days were unknown. Every day and every night was employed in his work, the work of 'saving souls.' And great was the success his Master gave him; numerous will be the stars in his crown gathered from Harford Circuit. He died in 1810."[5]

John Lee, who was appointed this year to the New Haven Circuit, entered the itinerant ministry in 1788,

[5] Letter to the author.

and was appointed, with his brother Jesse, to Flanders Circuit, N. J. The year following he was colleague with William Phœbus on the Long Island Circuit. His appearance on the new field of the East was brief, but important. Though attended by the disabilities of incurable disease, he had a soul of fire, and his shattered frame was indeed "the temple of the Holy Ghost;" a dilapidated shrine, in which the divine shekinah dwelt and shone. His brother has published a memoir of his brief and suffering life, which exhibits him as a man of extraordinary consecration, instant in prayer, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting for the salvation of souls, rising often in the midst of wintry nights, while all others around were wrapped in sleep, and struggling, like Jacob, in supplications for himself, the Church, and the world. With the tenderest sensibility, chastened by much physical suffering, a burning zeal that would have welcomed martyrdom, and persuasive and affecting powers of address, he appeared in the pulpit anointed with a divine unction which seemed to drip down his whole person, "like the precious ointment that ran down the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments." Many were blessed and comforted by his short ministry in the East. One circumstance, if no other, rendered his visit memorable. He was instrumental in the conversion of the first native Methodist preacher raised up in New England, who says, "John Lee came to Lynn, to visit his brother Jesse, on or near the 1st of September, 1791. His coming proved a blessing to many. He was a lively, animated preacher, had a strong, clear, musical voice, and was affectionate in his address. As he had drunk deep of the cup of bitterness for his own sins, he had a sympathizing heart for those who were in distress. He was

the instrument, in God's hand, of ministering the balm of comfort to my sin-sick soul. He was emphatically a son of consolation. His short visit to Lynn and vicinity was profitable to many. His last address was from Eph. v, 1: 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. He had a pleasant and profitable gift of exhortation, which he often improved after his brother Jesse and others had preached. He was of a consumptive habit, frequently spitting blood, which was increased by often speaking in public. He was obliged to retire from constant, laborious service, and lived a few years, lingering out a happy life, in endeavoring, in vain, to recover health, to be more active in the ministry. His death was singularly peaceful. His brother Jesse has published a short account of his experience, life and death. He located, through ill health, in 1791."[6]

His death was sudden, but worthy of him. He had been traveling in the Southern States, accompanied by a servant, seeking health. On his way home, without improvement, he observed to his attendant that he felt a difficulty in breathing, and believed he was near his end. His servant attempted to persuade him that his danger was not so imminent; he replied that "it was no trifling matter, for an ulcer was formed on his lungs; that he expected it would break, and if it did, he should die in a few hours."[7] In a short time he declared that the ulcer was broken. They hastened to a house and requested admission. After entering, he went out to the servant, who was taking care of the horses, and assuring him that he should die in a few hours, gave him his papers and directions respecting his burial. He re-entered the house, and inquired if any of the family could sing. His

[6] Letter of Rev. E. Mudge to the author.

[7] Lee's Memoir, p. 285.

hostess replied they could, but imperfectly. He asked if any of them prayed openly, but received no reply. He then said, "I must pray," and falling on his knees, lifted up his failing voice in supplication to God. He prayed again and again, and continued on his knees as if he wished to die in that posture; but his attendant took him up and laid him on a bed. He then sent a message to his friends, entreating them not to sorrow for his fate, and assuring them that he departed with certain hope of eternal life. He died without a groan, soon after the attack, in Surry County, North Carolina, on the 6th of October, 1801.

Nathaniel B. Mills was a hero in the early ministry. He was born in Newcastle County, Delaware, on the 23d of February, 1766. Up to the fifteenth year of his age he indulged, as he himself admits, in the usual follies and vices of youth; not, however, without serious and frequent reproaches of conscience. In his seventeenth year he was converted, and in 1787 joined the Baltimore Conference.

Before his arrival in New England he had traveled on Trenton, Salem, and Newburg Circuits, in New Jersey. In 1790 he was appointed to Hartford, Conn., in 1791 to Fairfield, Conn., and in 1792 to Dorchester, Md. During the following five years he labored extensively in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and other Middle States. In 1797 we find his appointment bearing the significant designation, "Ohio;" it doubtless verged on, if it did not penetrate, the wilderness which since, under the same name, has become one of the noblest States of the West. The following year he was again in Virginia, on Prince George Circuit; in 1800 he was colleague of the veteran James Quinn, at Pittsburg, under the presiding eldership of Daniel Hitt—an illustrious compan-

ionship. During twenty-four years we find him pursuing his ministerial career in the Baltimore Conference, moving to and fro, from its eastern circuits to Ohio, and from the interior of Pennsylvania to that of Virginia, until 1824, when he is recorded in the list of the "superannuated and worn-out preachers" of that Conference, in company with Nelson Reed, Joshua Wells, and other distinguished veterans. But it is hard for a hero to retire from the field while the clarion is still sounding, or the shout of battle is on the air; and even the old warhorse "saith among the trumpets, aha! aha! and smells the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains and the shouting." Though he had passed nearly forty years in the ministry, he left, at the next Conference, the ranks of the superannuated, and entered again the effective lists, where he continued till 1829, when, after a laborious career of forty-two years, he took his place among the supernumeraries. He continued, however, to preach regularly, being appointed that year to Rockingham; in 1830, to Great Falls; 1831, Loudon and Fairfax; 1832, Baltimore Circuit, 1833, Liberty; and in 1834, Frederick. In 1835 he was compelled to retire again to the ranks of the superannuated, where he continued till his death. The ministry of the word was, however, "a ruling passion" with him, and it was strong even till death. He continued to labor, with unyielding constancy, as he had strength and opportunity; and the last public act of his protracted ministry was performed on the last Sabbath of his life. Without a "struggle or a groan" he made his triumphant exit to the paradise of God, and literally ceased at once to "work and live." "He was a holy man of God," says the account to which I am indebted for most of these facts;[8] "he was, indeed, one

[8] Minutes, 1844–45.

of the last of that highly interesting class of men, the primitive school of Methodist ministers, to whom, under God, the Church and the world are so deeply indebted. His death may, to some extent, be regarded as the severance of the last link—so far, at least, as the ministry of this Conference is concerned—by which the past and the present have heretofore been united. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.'"

Henry Christie, his colleague, was admitted on trial, as a traveling preacher, this year, and appointed to Litchfield Circuit. He afterward traveled Columbia Circuit, (N. Y.) His marriage, as usual in those days of the poverty of the Church, led to his location. He resided more than twenty years in Cornwall, Litchfield County, Connecticut, where he continued to assist his itinerant brethren as a faithful local preacher. He shared, also, their trials. He was summoned early one morning, before he was out of his bed, with a writ, by a sheriff, for marrying a couple, and was saved from a lodgment in jail only by the timely bail of a Christian brother. In 1817 he removed to Ohio, where he continued to preach with increased frequency, and where we shall hereafter meet him. The exposure to which he was subjected in his preaching excursions at last destroyed his health, and in 1826 he sunk into the repose of the grave, joyful in the hope of the first resurrection. On his dying bed, being asked how he was, he replied, "I am near my Father's house." To his neighbors and friends, who often visited him, he spoke of the raptures of his soul, and of his cloudless prospect of the eternal inheritance which awaited him. He admonished his family to be faithful to God, and requested them to inform the absent members, "that he died in the faith." His last hours

were relieved by special consolation and triumph. When assured by his physician that his agonies (which were very severe) would soon end, he smiled, and exclaimed, "Glory to God! I have a desire to depart and be with Christ." When his final hour arrived, he extended his almost lifeless hand to the bystanders, evidently for the purpose of having his family come near to him; but he was unable to speak; his countenance shining with joy, expressed his emotions. He endeavored to close his own eyes, but failing to do so, clapped his hands in token of victory and died.[9]

We turn our glance from these subordinate laborers, not without a sense of its unavoidable inadequacy, to the champion of the arena. Lee was preparing, at the New York Conference, to return to his New England labors and struggles, but before he left melancholy news arrived, informing him of the death of his mother, whom he had not seen for two years and a half. He wept, was "confused in mind, scarcely knowing whether to return to New England or go home;" but his missionary zeal prevailed; he sent his brother to the afflicted family, "went with him to the ferry, stood and looked after him for a while, returned with a sorrowful heart," and, in less than a week, was sounding the evangelical trumpet again in the unfinished chapel, and receiving consolation in his sorrow from the little band of disciples at Dantown, Conn. He also visited Stamford, Middlesex, Wilton, Reading, Newtown, Stratford, Putney, Milford, Wallingford, Middlefields, Middletown, South Farms, Wethersfield, and Hartford, at the last of which places he formed a Society. From Hartford he set out for Boston, and arrived there on the 13th of November. The next day was Sunday, but there was no place in which

[9] Meth. Mag., vol. ix, 1826.

he could preach. At night he addressed a small company in a private house.

His reception in the Puritan city at this time was, if possible, even more discouraging than at his previous visit. The description of it is chilling. "The following part of the week," he says, "I met with great and heavy trials. I took much pains in trying to get a house to preach in; but all in vain. A few of the friendly people made a little move also, but did not succeed. One of the greatest friends I had in the town, when I was here before, did not come to see me now; and when I went to see him would scarcely take any notice of me. I met with difficulties and troubles daily, yet I put my trust in God, and in general was confirmed in the opinion that God would bless my coming to Boston. The greater part of the week was wet, so that I could go out but little. My cry was, 'Lord, help me.'"

More than a week had thus passed, without affording a suitable house for preaching; and the Common, his resort at his former visit, was too exposed to the inclemency of the season to admit of an assembly under its trees. On Monday, the 22d, he "tried every prudent means" to obtain a house, but in vain. A second week passed without success, but a gleam of hope came from another quarter. "We had a letter," he says, "from a gentleman in Lynn, who desired me to come and see him, and gave me some encouragement, for he said he had a desire to hear some of the Methodists preach. I then began to think that the Lord was about opening a way for me there. I made some inquiry about a place in Boston, and told some of my best friends that if they could not get one I would go myself, and try and do the best I could. I began to think the Lord would grant me my request, and provide me a place to preach

in.'" He could not leave Boston without further efforts. "A man went with me to the high sheriff, and we asked for liberty to preach in the court-house. He said he could not give leave himself, but that the clerk of the court had the disposing of the house, and we must apply to him. So we went to the clerk, but he very abruptly refused. After hearing him talk for a while we left him, and I felt more discouraged than ever; yet, if I am right, the Lord will provide for me. Thursday, 2d of December, at night one of my friends came home with me, and told me he had used every means he could to get a particular school-house for me, but had at last received a plain denial, and it was given up. This, with all the other denials, bore pretty heavy upon my mind, and I began to doubt again whether I ought to be here or not."

More than four weeks had passed in these useless endeavors to obtain a place for preaching; it was time to look elsewhere.[10] "On Monday," he writes, "I left Boston, and went to Benjamin Johnson's, in Lynn, about twelve miles. I was very gladly received by him and

[10] Nothing, however, could chill his humor. It was on his way from Boston to Lynn that he had the famous trial of wit with two lawyers. While riding along he perceived them hastening after him on horseback, with evident expectations of amusement. They entered into conversation with him on extemporaneous speaking, one on each side of him. "Don't you often make mistakes?" "Yes." "Well, what do you do with them? Let them go?" "Sometimes I do," replied the preacher, dryly; "if they are very important, I correct them; if not, or if they express the truth, though differently from what I designed, I often let them go. For instance, if, in preaching, I should wish to quote the text which says, 'the devil is a liar and the father of it,' and should happen to misquote it, and say he was a '*lawyer*,' etc., why, it is so near the truth I should probably let it pass." "Humph!" exclaimed the lawyer, "I don't know whether you are more a knave or a fool." "Neither," replied Lee, looking from one to the other, "I believe I am just between the two." The gentlemen of the bar looked at each other and were soon in advance, hastening on their way.

his family. I felt as though I was at home as soon as I arrived. I had not been there long before he expressed a desire of having a Methodist Society set up in the town, though he had not heard a Methodist preach for nearly twenty years. In this place I found several persons that had heard some of our preachers in the South. Some of the people consider it as a very favorable providence that I have come to Lynn at this time, and they bid me welcome with a cheerful heart." The next day the news of his arrival was spread through the village, and in the evening he preached at Johnson's house, the first sermon delivered by a Methodist preacher in Lynn. His text was: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." "I had," he says, "a good many hearers, and great freedom in preaching. I maintained that Christ died for all men, without respect to persons. I felt much of the power and love of God, and earnestly begged the people to turn from their sins and come to Christ. The hearers were very attentive, and a few of them seemed to be somewhat affected." "Bless the Lord, O my soul," he adds, "for bringing me among this people."

His friends at Lynn wished to form a Methodist Society immediately, but leaving with them copies of the General Rules, and directing them to reflect longer on their proposition, he returned again to Boston, determined not to abandon it without a further struggle. Pecuniary embarrassments were added to his other vexations, but he was not to be discouraged. "When I arrived in Boston," he remarks, "everything appeared as dark as when I left it, respecting my preaching. I had to get a new boarding-place. When I settled my past boarding I had two shillings and a penny left,

which was all that I possessed. Some days before I felt concerned about my purse, not knowing that there was enough in it to discharge the debt due for my board. I was unwilling to let the people know that my money was just gone, for fear they should think it was money only that I was after. But I soon felt confidence in God that he would provide for me, though I knew not how. However, a man in Lynn offered to buy a magazine that I had for my own use. I very willingly parted with it, and by that means was enabled to discharge the debt. And if I can always have two shillings by me, besides paying all I owe, I think I shall be satisfied." Such discouragements would have been insupportable to any ordinary man; but, though among strangers, repulsed on every hand, reduced to but two shillings, he could not be driven from the city. "He lingered," says his biographer, "until he bore his testimony for Jesus. His preaching was not in vain in the Lord. Some were touched under the word, and brought to feel the force of divine truth. And let the Methodists of Boston, who now enjoy such distinguished privileges, recollect that they are indebted, under the blessing of God, to the indefatigable perseverance of Jesse Lee, amid neglect and insults, for their first establishment."

The remainder of this year, and the year following, until the latter part of the month of May, his labors were principally in Boston, Lynn, Marblehead, Danvers, Manchester, Beverly, Cape Ann Harbor, Ipswich, and Salem. On the 20th February, 1791, he formed the first Methodist Society of Massachusetts in Lynn. It consisted of eight members. On the 27th of the same month it amounted to twenty-nine members, and in the ensuing month of May more than seventy persons took certificates of their attendance on his ministry, a measure

rendered necessary by the laws of that day, in order to secure them from taxation for the support of the clergy of the "standing order." On the 14th of June they began the erection of the first Methodist church in Massachusetts. It was raised on the 21st of the same month, and dedicated on the 26th. They entered it for public worship in less than two weeks from the day on which its foundation was laid. It may well be supposed that it was not finished with much fastidiousness. It was, in fact, but the shell of a frame building.

Lynn now became his head-quarters, until his departure to the next Conference at New York. His excursions from it were, however, incessant, and in all directions. He kept a steady eye on Boston, returning to it at frequent intervals.

On Monday, the 9th of May, he took his leave of Lynn for the New York Conference. "I met," he says, "the men's class in Lynn in the morning, and they seemed lively and very humble. We had a sorrowful parting. It is not quite five months since I first preached in this place, and there are now in Society fifty-eight members. About ten o'clock, the men who generally attend on my preaching came to me and obtained certificates to show that they attended public worship with the Methodists, and contributed to the support of their ministry. After dinner I prayed with those that were present, and then bid them all farewell and set out for Conference at New York."

About seven months had passed since the preceding Conference. Lee had made a strong impression in the region of Boston, Lynn, Salem, Ipswich, Newburyport, and other towns. Only a single Society, however, had been organized. An extensive circuit had, nevertheless, been formed, with posts of regular labor, and Boston

itself, though no Society was formed there till the next year, had given an humble place to the indomitable evangelist; one which, however dubious its prospects might have appeared, could never again be wrested from a man of his vigor. He went to the Conference then reporting one circuit, one Society, and fifty-eight members. His colleagues, in the west of New England, had been cheered by visible success. Six circuits were reported bearing New England names. The returns of members in Society on these circuits exhibited an aggregate of four hundred and eighty-one,[11] a gain of three hundred on the returns made eight months before. The good seed, so widely sown and laboriously nurtured, had taken root and was already bearing fruit. The experiment of Methodism in New England was determined. Thenceforth was the new denomination to take rank among the Christian bodies of the Puritan states, spreading the principles of a milder theology and a livelier piety through their length and breadth.

[11] One at least of these circuits reached into New York. Our ecclesiastical geography then, as now, disclaimed all regard to the civil divisions of the land, and is, therefore, involved in confusion.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEE AND ASBURY IN NEW ENGLAND, 1791–92.

Plan of Labors — Obscurity of the Early Laborers — Lee Returns to the East — Excursion into New Hampshire — Preaches in Needham — Excursion to Rhode Island — Excursion to Western New England — View of his Labors — Asbury enters New England — His Incessant Preaching — Scenes at Stepney — Stratford — New Haven — Middletown — Newport — Providence — Boston — Lynn — His Return Westward — Results of the Year — Session of the First New England Conference — Asbury — Lee — Services at the Conference — Appointments — Membership — Lee Itinerating — Methodism Prevails — Results of the Year — First New England Conference: Note.

We have followed Lee and his fellow-laborers down to the end of the ecclesiastical year 1790–91. On the 26th of May,[1] 1791, the Conference assembled in New York city. The Minutes report the plan of appointments in New England for the year: Jesse Lee, elder; Litchfield, Matthias Swaim, James Covel; Fairfield, Nathaniel B. Mills, Aaron Hunt; Middlefields, John Allen, George Roberts; Hartford, Lemuel Smith, Menzies Rainor; Stockbridge, Robert Green; Lynn, John Bloodgood, Daniel Smith. One district and six circuits, four in Connecticut and two in Massachusetts, with eleven circuit preachers and one presiding elder, now constituted the ministerial corps and field of Methodism in the Eastern States.

Stockbridge is the name of a new circuit in Massachusetts, reported now for the first time. Middlefields,[2]

[1] Not the 26th of June, as Ffirth's Memoir of Lee states.

[2] We do not find the name of this circuit in either Lee's or Bangs's History for the year 1791; but it is in the Minutes, both among the ap-

Conn., appears also for the first time; a new name, probably, for one of the circuits reported the preceding year. Boston Circuit of the last year changes its name to Lynn in the present Minutes.

As we recast our eye over this list of the pioneer laborers of Methodism in the East, we cannot repress the repeated expression of our regret that from the deficiency of the cotemporary records of the Church, names which should be so precious in its memory must remain in its annals like those fixed stars of our firmament, the remoteness of which occasions alike our ignorance of their conditions, and their steadfastness of position and brilliance. We have already given what slight information we could glean respecting a few of them. The extent of our knowledge of the remainder is still more limited. Of many we can ascertain nothing except the designation of their places of labor, and the statistical proofs of their success, in the Minutes. Some of them will come under our notice hereafter.

Lee was appointed, as we have seen, presiding elder, with a district which comprehended the whole Methodist interest in New England, and the recently formed circuit of Kingston, in Upper Canada. He devoted his attention, however, chiefly to the region of the Atlantic coast, visiting but once the Societies in Connecticut. By the latter part of July he was again at Lynn, and labored for a month among the neighboring towns. He then departed for New Hampshire, but has left no important record of his journey. "I think," he wrote on his way back, "the time is near when the work of the Lord will begin to revive in this part of the world, and if the Lord

pointments and in the census of members. In the latter sixty-two are assigned to it, a larger number than on Lynn, Stockbridge, or Hartford Circuits. I suppose, therefore, that it is a previous circuit newly named. The name of New Haven disappears this year.

work by us, our good mistaken brethren will be brought to say, 'Send, Lord, by whom thou wilt send.'"

On the 6th of the next month he preached the first Methodist sermon in Needham, Mass., with much interest, which was shared fully by the people. They entreated him to tarry longer, and revisit them often. He was on another errand, however, and could not delay. We have already recorded his flying tour through Rhode Island the preceding year. He was now on his way thither again, to ascertain the effects of those labors, and the practicability of forming a circuit in that state by the ensuing Conference. Leaving Needham the next day, he arrived in Providence by the same night, and preached the following evening. The ensuing day he rode to General Lippet's, at Cranston, and "was very kindly received," and on Friday, the 11th, he preached at the general's "with more than usual comfort." "My heart," he says, "was drawn out in love and pity toward my hearers. In this place the people know but little of the life and power of religion, and it is very seldom that they can get to any place of public worship. Seeing how destitute they are of the preaching of the Gospel, I was brought again to pray earnestly that the Lord would send forth more laborers into the vineyard." General Lippet became a leading friend of the Church in his State, and will hereafter claim our grateful attention.

Lee's visits and consultations in Rhode Island led him to project a circuit in that State, which was recognized by the next Conference, and included most of those beautiful villages, on the shores of Providence River and Narraganset Bay, that now sustain vigorous Methodist Churches.

Again he returned to Lynn, but on his arrival found Robert Bonsal, "just come from New York to preach

the Gospel in these parts." Lee could now be spared from the circuit; leaving it, therefore, in the care of Smith and Bonsal, he immediately departed, proclaiming the word through the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut. He found a prosperous society formed at Enfield, and a visible improvement in the various appointments which he had established while laboring in Connecticut. "I see," he says, "that the Lord has prospered his work among the Methodists since I visited this part of the vineyard." In this excursion for a little more than one month (thirty-three days) he traveled five hundred and seventeen miles, and preached forty sermons. "I have reason," he says, on his return to Lynn, "to hope that the Lord has given me fresh strength and courage to go forward in his ways." During the last fourteen months he had preached three hundred and twenty-one sermons, besides delivering twenty-four public exhortations, and making almost continual journeys into New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and still he exclaims, "Forward! with fresh strength and courage."

A great man, both in word and deed, was this apostle of Methodism in the East, but a greater than he passed through these same regions during the period under review. Asbury entered Connecticut on the 4th of June, 1791. Though most repulsive vexations attended his visit, his notices of the country are expressive of that hopefulness which usually characterizes great minds—minds conscious of the energy that secures great results. On arriving at Reading, where Lee had formed his second class in Connecticut, he exclaims: "I feel faith to believe that this visit to New England will be blessed to my own soul, and the souls of others. We are now in Connecticut, and never out of sight of a

house, and sometimes we have a view of many churches and steeples, built very neatly of wood. I do feel as if there had been religion in this country once, and I apprehend there is a little in form and theory left; but I fear they are now spiritually dead, and am persuaded that family and private prayer is very little practiced. Could these people be brought to constant, fervent prayer, the Lord would come down and work wonderfully among them. I find my mind fixed on God, and the work of God." He preached at Reading, on the Sabbath, with much satisfaction, and rode the same day to Newton, where, though "sick and weary," he again ascended the pulpit. He moved on without cessation, preaching, as was his wont, wherever an opportunity offered—in churches, when allowed; where these were denied, in town-houses; and where these were closed, in private houses. The next day after his labors at Reading and Newton he passed to Stepney, and delivered in a private house an awakening and melting exhortation. Thence he went, the same day, to Chestnut Hill, where, though he was not expected, word was sent round among the neighbors, and he addressed the hastily gathered assembly; but finding, by the time he had closed with prayer, that many others had arrived, he resumed the exercises, and "exhorted again for about forty minutes." Thence he drove on some miles further, and in the evening "had a small family meeting," at which he preached. Such is but a specimen of the daily course of this truly wonderful man, not only in New England, but through the length and breadth of the nation, and through nearly half a century.

The next day, 7th, he arrived at Stratford, the town near which Lee formed his first New England Society. The time of trials had not yet passed. "Good news" he ex-

claims, in a manner characteristic of himself; "they have voted that the town-house shall be shut. Well, where shall we preach? Some of the selectmen, one at least, granted access. I felt unwilling to go, as it is always my way not to push myself into any public house. We had close work on Isaiah lv, 6, 7. Some smiled, some laughed, some swore, some talked, some prayed, some wept. Had it been a house of our own, I should not have been surprised had the windows been broken. I refused to preach there any more, and it was well I did—two of the esquires were quite displeased at our admittance. We met the class, and found some gracious souls. The Methodists have a Society, consisting of about twenty members, some of them converted; but they have no house of worship. They may now make a benefit of a calamity; being denied the use of other houses, they will the more earnestly labor to get one of their own." Notwithstanding these repulses, he tarried the next day, and preached in a private house. "It was a time of comfort to the few seekers and believers present." The day following he reached New Haven, and addressed an audience which included some of the collegians, President Styles, and other clergymen. "When I had done," he writes, "no one spoke to me. I thought to-day of dear Mr. Whitefield's words to Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmoor, at their first coming over to America. 'Ah,' said he, 'if ye were Calvinists ye would take the country before ye.' We visited the college chapel, at the hour of prayer. I wished to go through the whole to inspect the interior arrangements, but no one invited me. The divines were grave, and the students were attentive; they treated me like a fellow-Christian in coming to hear me preach, and like a stranger in other respects. Should Cokesbury or Baltimore ever furnish the oppor-

tunity, I, in my turn, will requite their behavior by treating them as friends, brethren, and gentlemen." But what were such trials to this indomitable man? Trifles, which he brushed aside, as he "pressed on to the mark of the prize of his high calling." We still trace him onward, "crying aloud and sparing not," the next day at Wallingford, the following one at Wallingford Farms, to a "tender" and "alarmed" assembly; the day after, (Sabbath,) twice at Middlefields, and at night, the same day, in the Congregational church at Middletown, where he proclaimed, "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son and love one another." And when, after this weary day of labor, he had to ride "a mile out of town to get a lodging," he comforted himself with the reflection that "it was to the poorer classes of people that this preaching was anciently blessed." Could he now revisit that beautiful city he would be welcomed to scores of homes, where his name is revered as a beloved household word; and he might there also make the promised requital to the learned divines of New Haven, in an institution which has been distinguished by the presidency of men who would have dignified the chief chair of Yale.

He still pressed onward, passing through Haddam, New London, "where," he says, "my church was the court-house, my text 2 Peter iii, 15," Stonington, Westerly, R. I., Charlestown, and Newport, where, he writes, "I lectured the second night from Isaiah lxiv, 1–7; there was some life among the people, although it was late, and the congregation like our Lord's disciples before his passion. There is also a Jews' synagogue, and a Moravian chapel. I expect before many years the Methodists will also have a house of worship here." On Saturday, 18th, he started on his way to Providence,

remarking: "On this journey I feel much humbled. I am unknown, and have small congregations, to which I may add, a jar in sentiment; but I do not dispute. My soul is brought into close communion. I should not have felt for these people and for the preachers as I now do, had I not visited them; perhaps I may do something for them in a future day. We came to Bristol, and should have gone further, but Captain G. saw us, and took us to his house. At the request of a few persons I preached in the court-house to about a hundred people, and enforced, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,' and found a degree of liberty. Some time ago there was the beginning of a work here, but the few souls who began are now discouraged from meeting together. I fear religion is extinguished by confining it too much to church and Sunday service, and reading of sermons. I feel that I am not among my own people, although I believe there are some who fear God." The next day he was declaring, in Providence, the "acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God," from Isaiah lxi, 1–3. The day following he visited some serious families, and preached in the evening. He left the city, believing "that even we shall have something to do in this town." He spent a day at Easton, where he preached once, but called it a day of "rest," a "solemn, happy, and solitary retreat," where his "soul entered into renewed life."

On the 23d he reached Boston. The prospects of Methodism had scarcely improved there. He records, with emphasis, his inhospitable reception: "I felt much pressed in spirit, as if the door was not open. As it was court time, we were put to some difficulty in getting entertainment.. It was appointed for me to preach at Murray's Church—not at all pleasing to me, and that

which made it worse for me was, that I had only about twenty or thirty people to preach to in a large house. It appeared to me that those who professed friendship for us were ashamed to publish us. On Friday evening I preached again; my congregation was somewhat larger. Owing, perhaps, to the loudness of my voice, the sinners were noisy in the streets. My subject was Rev. iii, 17, 18. I was disturbed, and not at liberty, although I sought it. I have done with Boston until we can obtain a lodging, a house to preach in, and some to join us. Some things here are to be admired in the place and among the people; their bridges are great works, and none are ashamed of labor. Of their hospitality I cannot boast. In Charleston, S. C., wicked Charleston, six years ago, a stranger, I was kindly invited to eat and drink by many—here by none."

He had faith in the future, however, and the future has justified it. "The Methodists," he says, "have no house, but their time may come." In our day, some ten churches, some of them among the best ornaments of the city, are occupied by his sons in the ministry, and are more numerous than its Puritan churches at that time He tarried in Boston two days, and left it on the third for Lynn, where he was "agreeably surprised" to find a "Methodist chapel raised." After his discouraging reception in the Metropolis he speaks with enthusiasm of Lynn, calling it the "perfection of beauty." He says, "It is seated on a plain, under a range of craggy hills, and open to the sea; there is a promising Society, an exceedingly well-behaved congregation; these things, doubtless, made all pleasing to me My first subject was Romans viii, 33; in the afternoon, Acts iv, 12." He adds, with prophetic foresight, "Here we shall make a firm stand; and from this central point, from Lynn, shall

the light of Methodism and truth radiate through the state."

On the 28th he rode to Marblehead. "When I entered this place," he writes, "my heart was more melted toward its inhabitants than to any in these parts, with the exception of Lynn. After consultation, and some altercation among themselves, the committee invited me to preach in Mr. Story's Meeting-house, which I did accordingly, at four o'clock, on Acts xxiv, 17, 18. I was led to speak alarmingly, while I pointed out the Gospel as descriptive of their misery and need of mercy. Brother Lee preached in the evening to a great number of people in and about Mr. Martin's house. Next morning, weak as I was, I could not forbear speaking to them on 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God.'" He went, next day, to Salem, but was denied the use of any of the churches. He delivered his message, however, in the court-house, from Rom. v, 6, 7. At Manchester he met a more courteous reception, and was admitted by the selectmen to the parish church. He returned to Lynn, where he tarried ten days, preaching, meeting classes, baptizing, administering the Lord's supper, and visiting from house to house. On the Sabbath he preached three times. "The congregations were attentive, and my mind enjoyed sweet peace; although, outwardly, we were uncomfortable, the Meeting-house being open, and the weather very cool for the season. I feel as if God would work in these states, and give us a great harvest." And again he predicts "that a glorious work of God will be wrought here," and adds, "several people are under awakenings at this time; my staying so long may be of the Lord."

Ten days in one place was a long delay for Asbury. On the 13th of July he set his face toward the West,

and again we trace him through a rapid passage, from Lynn to Springfield, where, on the 15th, he lifted up his voice, declaring, "It is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you;" the people were "moved," and one individual was "under deep conviction." He entered Connecticut, and, after preaching on the way, arrived at Hartford on the 19th, where he addressed an assembly from "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." He passed to East Hartford, where he preached with more than usual freedom, to a "feeling congregation." The next day he was at West Farmington, and had a "gracious shower at the Quarterly Meeting." At Litchfield, where he delivered a discourse the ensuing day, in the "Episcopal Church," he characterizes the times by remarking, "I think Morse's account of his countrymen is near the truth; never have I seen any people who would talk so long, so correctly, and so seriously about trifles." He continued his route through Cornwall, New Britain, to Albany, preaching by night and by day. Such was the rapid tour through New England of this great apostle of American Methodism It occupied less than eight weeks, but he had proclaimed his message in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts; had counseled with and directed the few laborers in the field, and had surveyed it sufficiently to guide him in his subsequent plans respecting it. He left New England with this reflection: "I am led to think the eastern Church will find this saying hold true in the Methodists, namely, 'I will provoke you to jealousy by a people that were no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you.'"

Thus much have we been able to ascertain respecting the laborers and labors of the ecclesiastical year, from May, 1791, to August, 1792. What were the results?

We have but obscure intimations in the slight records of the times, but enough to show that it was the most prosperous of the three years which had passed since the introduction of Methodism into New England. Extensive revivals had occurred in several sections of the country. Lee informs us "that there was a considerable awakening among the people in different places, not far from Lynn;"[3] that a door was opened for the outspread of Methodism through the Eastern States; that invitations for preachers multiplied in various directions; and, notwithstanding the general prejudice against the new Church, its members increased both in numbers and respectability. The circuits in Connecticut had been blessed with much prosperity. Of Reading, Asbury remarks: "God has wrought wonders in this town; the spirit of prayer is among the people, and several souls have been brought to God." On the Hartford Circuit an extensive reformation had prevailed. Demonstrations of the divine Spirit, like those witnessed in the days of Edwards and Whitefield, were again common among the towns on the banks of the Connecticut. At Tolland and the neighboring villages the interest was especially profound. Asbury estimates that one hundred and fifty souls were converted there, and that twice the number were under awakenings in the Societies around. "I felt," he says, "very solemn among them. Brothers Smith and Rainor have been owned of the Lord in these parts." He also speaks of a "melting among the people," at Pittsfield, where the "Lord was at work." About two hundred had been converted since the last Conference on the Albany District, which extended over this part of Massachusetts.

Three additional circuits, wholly or partly in New

[3] History of Methodism, anno 1791.

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England, were reported this year, and the number of members returned from circuits bearing New England names was one thousand three hundred and fifty-eight, showing a gain of nearly nine hundred for the year. The few and scattered itinerants had made full proof of their ministry. Though still subjected to severe privations and annoying vexations, a goodly multitude of renewed souls now greeted and befriended them in their travels, and welcomed them, after the fatigues of the day, to humble but comfortable and consecrated homes. A Methodist people had been raised up; few, indeed, and feeble, but never to cease, we may trust, till the heavens and the earth are no more.

Lee arrived in Lynn, from his excursion to Connecticut, in the early part of May, 1792. He continued his labors in that town and its vicinity till the first week in August—a period memorable in the history of the denomination as the date of the first Conference held in the State of Massachusetts, and the first in New England.[4] The preceding ecclesiastical year had included more than fourteen months. After so long a separation, and untold privations, labors, and sufferings, it was, indeed, a "holy convocation," a high festival, for the little company of itinerants, to meet in their first Conference. They assembled, as was befitting, in the first, and still unfinished, Methodist Chapel of Massachusetts. Asbury, who had now returned, speaks of it as a matter of congratulation, that "in Lynn we have the outside of a house completed." Had we here the necessary data, it would be a grateful task to paint the picture of that first and memorable convention of New

[4] The time appointed for this Conference, in the Minutes of the preceding year, was the first of August; but it appears, from Asbury's journal, that it began on the third.

England Methodist preachers. We are able, however, to catch but a glimpse of it. We know the number, but hardly the names, of those who were present. "Our Conference," says Asbury, "met, consisting of eight persons, much united, besides myself." Asbury is himself the most imposing figure in the group. He was yet short of fifty years of age, and in the maturity of his physical and intellectual strength; his person was slight, but vigorous and erect; his eye stern, but bright; his brow began to show those wrinkles, the effects of extraordinary cares and fatigues, which afterward formed so marked a feature of his strongly characteristic face; his countenance was expressive of decision, sagacity, benignity, and was shaded, at times, by an aspect of deep anxiety, if not dejection; his attitude was dignified, if not graceful; his voice sonorous and commanding.

By his side sat Lee, second only in the ranks of the ministry, for labors and travels, to its great leader. We have sketched, and are yet further to illustrate his character, by the narrative of his labors. He was about the period of middle age, stout, athletic, full of vigor of muscle and feeling. His face was strongly marked by shrewdness, tenderness, and cheerfulness, if not humor; his manners, by unpretending dignity, remarkable temperance in debate, and fervid piety, mixed frequently, however, with vivid sallies of wit, and startling repartees. This trait of *bonhommie* was not without its advantages; it gave him access to the popular mind, and relieved the peculiar trials of his ministry. No man of less cheerful temperament could have brooked the chilling treatment he encountered while traveling the New England States without colleague and without sympathy. This solitariness in a strange land, often without the stimulus of even persecution, but rendered doubly

chilling by universal indifference or frigid politeness, was one of the strongest tests of his character. Those only can appreciate it who have endured it. He sat in the little band of his fellow-laborers with a cheerful aspect, for though he had gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, it was now springing up, and whitening for the harvest, over the land. If it had been but as "a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains," it now promised that "the fruit thereof would yet shake like Lebanon." In the group sat also the young and eloquent Hope Hull, the Summerfield of the time, attractive with the beauty of talent and of holiness, "that extraordinary young man," as Thomas Ware called him, "under whose discourses the people were as clay in the hands of the potter." Asbury brought him, on his tour to this Conference, from the South, where he had been persecuted out of Savannah. There were, also, the youthful and talented Rainor, fresh from the revivals on Hartford Circuit, and undiverted yet from the labors of the itinerancy by the love of ease or domestic comfort, which was afterward too strong for him, and Allen, the "Boanerges," as his brethren called him. Besides these, it is probable that Lemuel Smith and Jeremiah Cosden were present.

Asbury introduced the occasion by a discourse on 1 John iv, 1–6. On Saturday he preached an ordination sermon, to a "very solemn congregation," from the text, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." There was preaching every night during the session. The Sabbath "was the last day, that great day of the feast." A love-feast was held in the morning, after which Asbury preached on 1 Corinthians vi, 19, 20. In the afternoon John Allen preached, and the bishop gave

a "farewell exhortation" to the people, who were deeply affected at his parting counsels. The next day he was away again, "making a hasty flight," as usual, and in four days he had passed over one hundred and seventy miles from Lynn, on his way to other Conferences.

The Minutes of this year record the following ministerial arrangements for New England: Jesse Lee, Elder; Lynn, Menzies Rainor; Boston, Jeremiah Cosden; Needham, John Allen; Providence, Lemuel Smith. Jacob Brush, Elder; Fairfield, Joshua Taylor and Smith Weeks; Litchfield, Philip Wager and James Coleman; Middletown, Richard Swain and Aaron Hunt; Hartford, Hope Hull, George Roberts, and F. Aldridge; Pittsfield, D. Kendall, R. Dillon, and J. Rexford. This last circuit was on the Albany District, and under the presiding eldership of Garrettson. The district of Jacob Brush extended over a large portion of the State of New York, though a majority of the places named, as comprised within its limits, were in Connecticut. It has already been stated that there were four new circuits reported, but one of those reported the last year was merged in a new arrangement of the Connecticut circuits. Boston, Needham, Providence, and Pittsfield Circuits appear, for the first time, in the Minutes of this year. The first was detached from Lynn, and the second and third were surveyed by Lee during the preceding year. The last was formed by preachers on the Albany District. The membership on the eastern circuits was still very limited. Boston returned but fifteen; Lynn one hundred and eighteen, (a gain of sixty since the preceding Conference,) Needham thirty-four. As we advance westward it largely increases; Middletown returned one hundred and twenty-four, and Hartford nearly two hundred. The latter circuit had gained one hundred and sixty-

seven during the past year—the result, doubtless, of the extensive "reformation" which had prevailed among its appointments. The circuits still more westward had yet larger returns, but what proportion of them pertained to New England cannot be ascertained.

Lee was appointed this year presiding elder over a district that included eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and the principal points of which were Lynn, Boston, Needham, and Providence. The General Conference was to convene on the first of the ensuing November, in Baltimore. But a brief interval of time remained, therefore, before it would be necessary for him to depart on his journey thither. He projected, however, a tour to Rhode Island, to attend to the further organization of the new Providence Circuit, which he had surveyed in his previous visit, and to which a preacher was assigned at the Conference of this year. In a few days after the adjournment of that body he was on his way thither. He visited Providence, Pawtuxet, Warren, and Bristol, preaching continually, putting in train the labors of the circuit for the newly arrived laborer, and re-entering Massachusetts after about one week's absence. On his return he preached at Taunton and Easton. At the latter place it appears that a Society had been already formed. On Saturday, August 18, he writes: "I rode to Easton, and met the class at five o'clock. When I consider the goodness of God to me in this journey, I am constrained to call upon my soul to bless his holy name. I have found delight in the service of God, and comfort among the people. I have had an opportunity of preaching to many who never heard a Methodist before."

On the 20th he was in Boston, and, at night, met the little class "which," he writes, "has been lately

formed." In his history he records with exactness the date of its organization. "We had preached," he says, "a long time in Boston before we formed a society, but on the 13th day of July, 1792, we joined a few in Society, and after a short time they began to increase in numbers. We met with uncommon difficulties here from the beginning, for the want of a convenient house to preach in. We began in private houses, and could seldom keep possession of them long. At last we obtained liberty to hold meetings in a school-house; but that too was soon denied us. We then rented a chamber in the north end of the town, where we continued to meet a considerable time regularly. The Society then undertook to get them a meeting-house, but being poor, and but few in number, they could do but little." Three years were yet to pass before the corner-stone of their first chapel could be laid. The next month he spent mostly in Lynn. He says: "Monday, 1st of October, I visited several friends in Lynn, and at night I preached my farewell sermon, on Phil. i, 27: 'Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, and that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind.' The Lord was with us of a truth; there was great weeping among the people, both men and women. I felt very sorry to leave them, and they seemed to be sorry to part with me, as I expected to go home, and be absent from them for the space of four months. But the will of the Lord be done. Tuesday, 2d, I left Lynn, with a good deal of sorrow, and set out on my journey."

With the leave-taking of Lee we must also take leave, for the present, of New England; but in thus reaching the limit of our present period, we perceive that his

mission has been decisively successful. The tenacity of his purpose, the persistence of his zeal, have at last triumphed. Methodism has effectively taken its place in the ecclesiastical history of the Puritan states, and the name of its resolute pioneer must forever live in the records which commemorate those of the Mathers, Williams, Edwards, Channing, Ballou. The returns in the Minutes at the end of the Conference year exhibit an advance in the membership of more than one fourth on the number of the preceding report. Four years had not yet elapsed since the formation of the first Society at Stratfield; the numerical gain of the infant Church thus far had been at the average rate of at least 435 per year, no small growth under the inauspicious circumstances of the times. All the circuits report an increase, except Litchfield, which descends from 428 (the number of the preceding year) to 184. This circuit, it must be remembered, extended into New York, and the apparent diminution may be owing to the incorporation of its Western appointments into new circuits. Lynn returned 166, a gain of nearly 50; Needham 50, a gain of 16; Middletown 172, a gain of nearly 50; Hartford 331, a gain of 146; Pittsfield 330, a gain of more than 100; reluctant Boston returns 41, a gain of 26. Four circuits bearing New England names make returns for the first time this year: they are New London, which reports 50 members; Warren, R. I., 58; Greenwich, R. I., 16; and Granville, Mass., 90. The returns from Rhode Island were the first reported from that state; they amounted to but 74. There had been an extensive outspread of Methodism through Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. In the latter, even the stronghold of the metropolis had yielded to the invincible zeal of Lee, and its little band of twoscore members were already projecting

the erection of a chapel. A considerable revival had prevailed during the year at Lynn, resulting, as we have seen, in an addition of nearly fifty to the Society. The Hartford and Middletown Circuits had lately gathered into their humble communion nearly two hundred souls; the purifying fires, kindled along the banks of the Connecticut the previous year by the instrumentality of Lemuel Smith and Menzies Rainor, had extended and heightened, during the present one, under the faithful labors of the eloquent Hope Hull and his colleagues, Roberts and Aldridge. Asbury supposed that more than three hundred souls had been awakened, and more than two hundred converted on the Hartford Circuit since the last Conference. Meanwhile the western circuits, on the Albany District, shared this success; the untiring evangelists who traveled them were cheered by the triumphs of the truth, and displays of the divine power in the conviction and conversion of scores of their hearers; on the Pittsfield Circuit alone more than a hundred were enrolled among the struggling new "sect everywhere spoken against." A consciousness of the security and prospective success of their cause had spread through all their ranks, and while the violent and prejudiced began to deem it time for hostilities, the disinterested and devout began to open their hearts and their houses to welcome the itinerant evangelists as the "blessed" who "came in the name of the Lord," the men who "showed the way of salvation." Not only had their numbers augmented, but the field of travel and labor had extended in every direction. The number of circuits and stations had increased from nine to fourteen, and Lee began to cast his eye abroad for a new and more distant arena. He went to the Conference, determined to offer himself as a missionary to the "province of Maine," then a

remote wilderness. Thither we shall hereafter follow him, to witness continued exhibitions of the moral heroism of his character while braving the inclemencies and perils of a new country, and achieving the sublime task of founding a religious organization which was to scatter, in our day, more than four hundred traveling and local preachers among its villages and cities, and enroll in them nearly twenty-five thousand members.

NOTE.—At the New York Conference of 1790 it was proposed to hold a session in Connecticut in July, 1791, but I have reason to doubt that it was held. Asbury passed through that state in the month of July; on the day appointed for the Conference (23d) he traveled by a rocky, mountainous way to Cornwall, and preached to "about one hundred and fifty hearers," but makes no allusion to the presence of the preachers, or to any Conference business. He left the next day. Lee's Journal indicates that he himself was pursuing his labors at Lynn the next week after the appointed time for this Conference, and, therefore, renders it probable that it was not held. It is evident, also, from his biographer's notice of the constitution of his New England district, that the appointments for 1791 were made at the New York Conference of May 26, and not at the proposed Connecticut Conference two months subsequent. No material business, therefore, could have been transacted at the latter if it was held. The biographer of Lee affirms, also, that "no Conference prior to 1792 had been held further north than New York or Albany." (Chap. xiii.) I suppose the affirmation is made on the authority of Lee's private papers. Dr. Bangs has included this appointed Conference among the actual sessions of that year, but informed me that he did so solely on the authority of the appointment in the Minutes. He was able to find no other intimation of it. Enoch Mudge, a personal friend of Lee, and a resident of Lynn at the time, assured me that Lee was in Lynn not only the week after the date of the Conference, but during the week in which it was appointed to be held, and that no such Conference was ever held. Aaron Hunt had his appointment this very year in Connecticut, and assured me that the first Conference in Connecticut was that of Tolland, in 1793. Lee does mention this Connecticut Conference in his History of Methodism, and this fact would, at first view, seem conclusive of the question. It did so seem to the author, till a thorough investigation nearly demonstrated the contrary. I found, on examining his "History," that his statements of the sessions of Conferences were simply copies from the Minutes, with an introductory phrase stating how many "we had," and their numerical order prefixed. It is probable that these statements were cut out of the printed Minutes and sent thus to the printer.

CHAPTER IX.

CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS, FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE FIRST REGULAR GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1785–1792.

Conferences after the Christmas General Conference — Slavery — Children — Church Registers — Colored People — Coke and the Conference of 1787 — Wesley's Name Omitted from the Minutes — The Title of Bishop Adopted — Publication of Books — Reinsertion of Wesley's Name in the Minutes — The Book Concern Begun — Its Importance — The "Council" — Its Failure — Presiding Elders — The Bishops Address President Washington — Sunday-Schools Ordered — Methodism and Sunday-Schools — Asbury Establishes the First in America — Their great Growth in the Church — Statistical Progress of the Denomination from 1784 to 1790 — From the General Conference of 1784 to that of 1792 — From the First Annual Conference, 1773, to the First Regular General Conference, 1792 — Territorial Extension — The Native Ministry — Their Labors and Sufferings — Asbury's Poverty and Liberality — Locations and Deaths — Apostolic Character of the Ministry.

After the General Conference of 1784 the Annual Conferences lose much of their historical importance. The organic measures of that session rendered much additional legislation unnecessary for a number of years. Down to that momentous assembly the two or more annual sessions were understood to be but one Conference, holding adjourned meetings. The Church, invigorated by its more thorough organization, now rapidly enlarged, and its Conferences multiplied. They were no longer considered to be adjourned sessions of the same body.[1] But few grave matters of legislation were brought under their attention. It is probable, however,

[1] Lee, p. 118.

that any such matters were, as heretofore, submitted to the vote of each Conference before they were inserted in the laws of the denomination. A vague expectation of another General Conference seems to have been entertained, and important measures, which at any time appeared desirable, were mostly held in reserve for such a session. In the course of a few years, as we shall presently see, a general Council, the semblance of a General Conference, was attempted, and its failure providentially led to a regular Quadrennial Conference, which has ever since been the supreme body of the Church. We can, therefore, pass hastily over the Annual Conferences, from the Christmas General Conference of 1784 to the first regular General Conference of 1792. Their Minutes record little besides the names of preachers and the statistical returns of the circuits.

In the year (1785) following the Christmas Conference three sessions were appointed. By the year 1790 they had increased to fourteen, extending from New York to Georgia, from Baltimore to the Valley of the Mississippi; three, at least, being held beyond the Alleghanies. By the end of our present period they had increased to at least seventeen, one of them being held in New England. We cannot depend upon the Minutes for the number actually held. Some, as, for example, the first New York session, are unmentioned; others, like that designated in the printed list[2] as of "Connecticut" for 1791, did not meet. We have already had sufficient evidence that the official records cannot be relied on as to the number of these sessions.

In looking through the Minutes of these eight years we find but few items of historical interest, but some of them are of the highest importance. The only one

[2] Minutes of 1790.

recorded in 1785 is the suspension of the rules on slavery, accompanied, however, with the bold declaration that "we do hold in the deepest abhorrence the practice of slavery, and shall not cease to seek its destruction by all wise and prudent means." In 1786 the Minutes record nothing besides the usual routine questions and answers, and a few financial notices. In the ensuing year it is ordered that the children of the congregations shall be formed into classes; that register books shall be provided by the Societies for the record of baptisms and marriages, and an emphatic injunction on the preachers to leave nothing undone for the spiritual benefit and salvation "of the colored people" is inserted. It was at the Baltimore Conference of this year that Coke was severely rebuked for altering the time and place of Conference sessions, and for "writing improper letters to some of the preachers."[3] No man was ever more ready than he to make sacrifices for peace among his brethren; he therefore signed a certificate, which was witnessed by Tunnell, Haggerty, and Reed, declaring that he would "never exercise government whatever" in the Church during his absence from the United States, and use no other power when in the country than that of his Episcopal functions. It was also in this year that Garrettson and Whatcoat were appointed to the Episcopal office by Wesley, but not elected by the Conference. The reasons of Garrettson's failure have already been stated.[4] The chief reason for declining the election of Whatcoat was the apprehension of the Conference that if he were elected, Wesley would recall Asbury to England. Coke debated the matter, contending that the Conference was bound to obey Wesley by its pledge,

[3] Lee, p. 125.

[4] Lee, p. 126, gives them incorrectly. Correct him by Bangs, i, 258.

in 1784, that "during Mr. Wesley's life we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready, in matters belonging to Church government, to obey his commands." The argument was logical, but the pledge was unfortunate, and the Conference pleaded that "as they had made the engagement of their own accord, and among themselves, they had a right to depart therefrom when they pleased, seeing it was not a contract made with Mr. Wesley, or any other person, but an agreement among themselves."[5] It was also contended that Wesley's distance rendered him unable to judge of their wants and men. The Conference wrote him an affectionate letter, inviting him to visit America, but took the precaution to omit their former pledge from the printed Minutes, and thereby displaced his name from them.[6] It was in this year that the title of bishop first appeared in a new edition of the Discipline, as a personal designation of the superintendents, though it had been used otherwise in the Minutes from the organization of the Church.[7] The bishops themselves made the change, but it was approved at the ensuing Annual Conferences by the preachers. The new Discipline also contained a provision that the Conference shall be consulted respecting any publication of books, and that the profits of their sales shall be appropriated "to the college, the preachers' fund, the

[5] Lee, p. 127.

[6] Asbury, alluding to this pledge, said: "I never approved of that binding minute. I did not think it practical expediency to obey Mr. Wesley, at three thousand miles' distance, in all matters relative to Church government, neither did Brother Whateoat, nor several others. At the first General Conference I was mute and modest when it passed, and I was mute when it was expunged. For this Mr. Wesley blamed me, and was displeased that I did not rather reject the whole connection, or leave them, if they did not comply. But I could not give up the connection so easily, after laboring so many years with and for them."

[7] See p. 191.

deficiencies of preachers, distant missions, and debts on the churches." "From this time," says the first historian of the Church, "we began to publish more of our own books than we had ever before, and the principal part of the printing business was carried on in New York." No Conference publisher was, however, yet named, but the "Book Agency" was vaguely anticipated as a possible means of great usefulness in the denomination, and was soon to take effect. The Minutes of the year 1788 present nothing noteworthy besides the usual routine record. In the next year Wesley's name was reinserted in the Minutes, though not with the original pledge of the ministry to abide by his authority in matters of Church government. It is ambiguously, not to say clumsily, given[8] in the answer of the first question: "Who are the persons that exercise the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America? John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, *by regular order and succession.*"[9] Not only Wesley, but some of the American preachers, had been displeased by the omission of his name. It was readily restored as an act of respect, but was followed by another question and answer, which guarded the exclusive authority of the American Church: "Who have been elected, by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference, to superintend the Methodist connection in America? Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury."[10]

[8] See Bangs, i, 278.

[9] Both Lee and Bangs give the clause I have italicised, but it is not in the bound reprints of the Minutes. Bangs animadverts cautiously on the peculiar phraseology of the answer.

[10] Of course the election referred to was that of the Christmas General Conference. The importance of some of the proceedings of the years 1787 and 1788 has led to the conjecture that their sessions may have been General Conferences, (articles of Rev. Messrs. De Hass and Coggeshall, in Christian Advocate, January and February, 1859,) a

We now find in the Minutes further official provision made for the publication of books for the Church. John Dickins is appointed to Philadelphia, and designated as the "Book Steward;" and Philip Cox is left without a circuit, as "Book Steward" at large. The diffusion of religious literature had evidently become an important consideration with the Conference. We have seen it gradually approximate this conclusion. Philip Cox's itinerant labors in the good work have also been mentioned; he died in it after more than three years' services, which, say the Minutes, "were great in circulating so many hundred books of religious instruction."[11] He seems to have been practically a colporteur—the first example of that useful office in the United States. Though he was appointed to the book stewardship as early as Dickins, the latter is considered the founder of the "Book Concern." He was its first editor and publisher, and began it with a capital of six hundred dollars, his own money, lent to the Church. The first entry in the books of the institution is in his hand-writing, dated August 17, 1789, and shows that the first book issued was Wesley's abridged translation of the immortal "Imitatione" of Thomas à Kempis. In this year were also issued the first volume of the Arminian Magazine. mostly a reprint of Wesley's periodical of that name. Before the year closed a new edition of the Discipline, the Hymn Book, Baxter's Saint's Rest, and Wesley's Primitive Physic appeared. Such was the beginning of that gigantic Publishing House, which has become in our day one of the greatest powers of the denomination; with

question which will be examined in my account of the General Conference of 1792.

[11] Minutes of 1794. I am not aware, however, that any of our historical writers have ever mentioned his services in that great interest, except an allusion in Lednum.

two publishing houses, five depositories, a capital of nearly $800,000, (aside from that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, founded by a division of its funds,) its twelve editors, its nearly five hundred clerks and operatives, its more than twenty cylinder and power presses, its nearly thirty thousand different publications, its fourteen periodicals, with an aggregate circulation of over one million copies per month. We shall hereafter have occasion to narrate its history and estimate its importance more in detail.

The necessity of a General Conference was now generally felt, but it seemed impossible to assemble the preachers, so widely dispersed over the country. The bishops therefore proposed, in the sessions of this year, the plan of a "Council," to be composed of "chosen men, out of the several districts, as representatives of the whole connection." Its members were to consist of the bishops and presiding elders, never fewer than nine, who were to have "authority to mature everything they should judge expedient" for the unity, the doctrinal and moral integrity of the Church, and the improvement of its "colleges and plan of education, provided, however, that only its unanimous decisions should be presented to the Church, and these be binding, "in any district," only when they "have been agreed upon by a majority of the Conference which is held for that district." The bishops were to have authority to convene the Council at their discretion, and its first meeting was appointed for the first day of December, at Cokesbury College.

Though a majority of the preachers approved this scheme, and it seems to have been a favorite conception of Asbury, it soon became the occasion of much dispute, and even perilous contention. Composed exclusively of the bishops and the presiding elders, it was, apparently

without design, entirely under the control of the bishops, for they had discretionary power to appoint or displace the presiding elders. The dependence of its decisions upon the several districts, or Conferences, might tend to break up the uniformity, if not the unity, of the denomination; for, though some might approve and execute them, others, in which a majority dissented, could legally disregard them. The council held two sessions, in 1789 and 1790; it appointed a third for 1792, but the general opposition to it compelled the bishops to consent to substitute in its place a General Conference in the latter year.

The first occurrence of the title of Presiding Elder, in the official documents of the Church, was in the plan of this Council; it passed into the Minutes of the same year, doubtless for the purpose of conforming the latter to the former, for it disappears the next year, and does not reappear till the year 1797.

At the New York Conference for 1789 it was deemed expedient to recognize, in the name of the denomination, the new Federal Constitution lately adopted, and the chief magistrate, Washington, recently inaugurated. An address to the President was voted by the Conference. Dickins and Morrell were appointed to wait on him, and request him to designate a day for the reception of the bishops, who would present the address. May 29th was appointed, when Asbury, "with great self-possession," says Morrell, "read the address in an impressive manner. The President read his reply with fluency and animation. They interchanged their respective addresses; and, after sitting a few minutes, we departed. The address and the answer, in a few days, were inserted in the public prints; and some of the ministers and members of the other Churches appeared dissatisfied that the

Methodists should take the lead. In a few days the other denominations successively followed our example." The Address of the Bishops was signed by Coke and Asbury. It said: "We, the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, humbly beg leave, in the name of our Society, collectively, in these United States, to express to you the warm feelings of our hearts, and our sincere congratulations on your appointment to the presidentship of these states. We are conscious, from the signal proofs you have already given, that you are a friend of mankind; and under this established idea, place as full confidence in your wisdom and integrity for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of God and the glorious Revolution, as we believe ought to be reposed in man. We have received the most grateful satisfaction from the humble and entire dependence on the great Governor of the universe, which you have repeatedly expressed, acknowledging him the source of every blessing, and particularly of the most excellent Constitution of these states, which is at present the admiration of the world, and may in future become its great exemplar for imitation; and hence we enjoy a holy expectation, that you will always prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine, vital religion, the grand end of our creation and present probationary existence. And we promise you our fervent prayers to the throne of grace, that God Almighty may endue you with all the graces and gifts of his Holy Spirit, that he may enable you to fill up your important station to his glory, the good of his Church, the happiness and prosperity of the United States, and the welfare of mankind. Signed in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Washington, in reply, said: "I return to you individ-

ually, and through you to your Society collectively in the United States, my thanks for the demonstrations of affection, and the expressions of joy offered in their behalf, on my late appointment. It shall be my endeavor to manifest the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power toward the civil and religious liberties of the American people. In pursuing this line of conduct, I hope, by the assistance of divine Providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me. It always affords me satisfaction when I find a concurrence of sentiment and practice between all conscientious men, in acknowledgments of homage to the great Governor of the Universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination, who demean themselves as good citizens, will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion, I must assure you in particular, that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the throne of grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community."

The year 1790 was signalized by an ordinance of the conferences establishing Sunday-schools for the instruction of "poor children, white and black." "Let us," say the Minutes, "labor, as the heart and soul of one man, to establish Sunday-schools in or near the place of public worship. Let persons be appointed by the bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers to teach (gratis) all that will attend and have a capacity to learn, from six o'clock in the morning till ten, and from two o'clock in

the afternoon till six, where it does not interfere with public worship. The Council shall compile a proper school book to teach them learning and piety." [12]

This is supposed to be the first recognition of Sunday-schools by an American Church. Only about nine years had passed since they were begun in England. A young Methodist woman, afterward the wife of one of Wesley's most distinguished preachers, Samuel Bradburn, first suggested to Robert Raikes their organization in 1781 at Gloucester. She assisted him in forming the first school, attended with him the procession of ragged children from the school to the parish church, and was one of their most effective teachers.[13] John Wesley was the first man in England to publicly approve Raikes's plan, after the latter had published an account of it in the Gloucester Journal in 1784. Wesley immediately copied the account into his Arminian Magazine, and recommended his people to adopt the new institution. In the same year Fletcher, of Madeley, introduced it into his parish, and wrote an essay on "The Advantages likely to Arise from Sunday-schools." In the year 1786, four years before this order of the conferences, and five years before any other attention was given to the institution in this country, Asbury established the first Sunday-school in the new world, at the house of Thomas Crenshaw, in Hanover County, Va., and this first attempt prefigured one of the most important later advantages of the institution, by giving a useful preacher to the Methodist Episcopal Church.[14] The endeavor of 1790 to incorporate the institution into the Church, though for

[12] I cite this Minute from Lee's History, p. 162. It is not in the bound Minutes.

[13] Memoir of Sophia Bradburn, in Wesleyan Magazine for 1834, p. 319.

[14] Strickland's Asbury, p. 217. History of the Religious Movement, etc., II, 483, *et seq.*

some time feeble, if not defeated, at last succeeded, and in our day there are nearly a million scholars, and more than a hundred and fifty thousand teachers, in the various Methodist Sunday-schools of the United States. The "Sunday-School Union" has become one of the most important auxiliaries of the Book Concern, with its four periodicals, having an aggregate circulation of more than 260,000 per number. Its catalogue of publications includes more than 1,300 different works, with an annual issue of about a million copies, and its Sunday-school libraries report nearly two and a half millions of volumes. More than two hundred and thirty thousand conversions have been reported, in its schools, in the last fifteen years. The Church, then, made a mighty stride forward in 1790.

No important acts of the conferences of 1791 and 1792 are reported in the Minutes. The General Conference of the latter year was to furnish all the legislation necessary for the period.

From the Christmas Conference to the sessions of 1790 —somewhat more than five years—the statistical progress of the Church was remarkable. The returns of the year, which was closed by the Christmas Conference, showed about fifteen thousand members, (14,988,) and eighty-three preachers; the returns of the year 1790 amounted to more than fifty-seven thousand six hundred (57,631) members, and two hundred and twenty-seven preachers. The gains for these few years were, therefore, more than forty-two thousand six hundred (42,643) members, and one hundred and forty-four preachers. Estimating this period at six years,[15] it yields an average annual growth of more than seven thousand one hundred members, and of twenty-four preachers. The latter item needs, however, very

[15] The conferences being held at varied intervals in each year, it is difficult to make exact calendar estimates.

considerable qualification, for only the preachers actually on the list of appointments are reported; there is yet no supernumerary or superannuated list; and we have had frequent occasion to notice how many every year retired from the itinerancy. Nearly all these entered the ranks of the local ministry, and continued to be habitual preachers. At least twenty-eight thus disappeared from the Minutes in the interval between the Christmas Conference and the year 1790; and besides these, not a few who were received on trial were not admitted into membership with the conferences, but were remanded to the local ranks, where they nevertheless did good service. We may safely estimate the increase of the ministry, in this brief interval, at one hundred and seventy-five, giving an annual average gain of nearly thirty.

If we pass on, two years further, to the end of our present period, we meet an equally gratifying result. The aggregate returns for 1792 (all made before the session of the General Conference) swell to nearly sixty-six thousand (65,980) members, and two hundred and sixty-six preachers. The gains, then, since the returns last preceding the Christmas Conference, were nearly fifty-one thousand (50,992) members, and one hundred and eighty-three preachers. Estimating the interval at eight years, it exhibits an average annual gain of more than six thousand three hundred members, (6,374,) and of about twenty-three preachers. Qualifying the latter item, as above, the average ministerial gain must have been somewhat more than thirty.[16]

Such was the statistical strength of American Methodism when its second General Conference assembled in

[16] No less than twenty-three preachers located in the last two years, not including such as retired from the list of probationers.

Baltimore, in about eight years after its organization in that city, as "The Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States." Most of its founders were still living. Barbara Heck, Captain Webb, King, Watters, Gatch, Pilmoor, and Shadford.

About nineteen years had passed since its first Annual Conference was held in Philadelphia, and its first general statistical returns were made. It then reported eleven hundred and sixty members, and ten preachers; it had gained in the nineteen years nearly sixty-five thousand (64,820) members, and two hundred and fifty-six preachers. Its average annual gains had been more than thirty-four hundred (3,411) members, and more than thirteen preachers. There had been but two years in which the Minutes record a decrease of members: the first was 1778, when the Revolutionary War raged without, and the sacramental controversy within the Church —the loss amounted to eight hundred and seventy-three members, and five preachers; the second was 1780, the culmination of the sacramental contest, when a loss of seventy-three members was reported.[17]

Its territorial extension had not only kept pace with the settlement of the country, but had transcended it; for Methodism was now established permanently in Nova Scotia and Upper Canada. At its first Conference of 1773 it reported but six circuits, reaching along a narrow line from New York city to Petersburg, Va. It now reported a hundred and thirty-six, extending from beyond the St. Lawrence, to Savannah, Ga.; from Lynn, Mass., to the most western settlements of Kentucky and Tennessee. The whole settled country was threaded with

[17] The Minutes also indicate a loss of seven preachers, but in the preceding year they give five too many, by twice inserting the appointments for Baltimore and Frederick Circuits; the actual loss, therefore, could not be more than two.

them. Seventeen Conferences were held in 1792, and twenty appointed for the next year, five at least of the latter beyond the Alleghanies.

In the Conference of 1773 all the preachers save one, William Watters, were foreigners; but since the Christmas Conference Wesley had dispatched no "missionaries" to America. All his former missionaries, except Asbury and Whatcoat, had returned to Europe; but American Methodism had now its native ministry, numerous and vigorous. Besides Asbury, Coke, and Whatcoat, it still retained many of the great evangelists it had thus far raised up, and who have been sketched in these pages: Garrettson, Lee, Abbott, O'Kelly, Crawford, Toy, Burke, Poythress, Bruce, Breeze, Reed, Cooper, Everett, Willis, Wilson Lee, Dickins, Ware, Brush, Moriarty, Roberts, Hull, Losee, and others. A host of mighty men, who will hereafter claim our attention, had already joined these standard-bearers: M'Kendree, George, (both afterward bishops,) Roszel, Nolley, M'Gee, Smith, Gibson, M'Henry, Kobler, Fleming, Cook, Scott, Wells, Pickering, Sharp, Bostwick, M'Closkey, M'Combs, Bartine, Morrell, Taylor, Hunt, and scores more.[18] These were to be soon followed, or rather joined, by another host of as strong, if not stronger representative men: Roberts, Hedding, Soule, Bangs, Merwin, Capers, Pierce, Winans, Kennon, Kenneday, Douglass, Redman, Thornton, Finley, Cartwright, Elliott, and many others equal to them; and amid an army of such were to arise in due time, to give a new intellectual development to the ministry, such characters as Emory, Fisk, Ruter, Summerfield,

[18] Down to the Christmas Conference sketches have been given of almost all the preachers who entered the itinerancy. Since that session not a few important men have already appeared in the Minutes of whom no special notice has thus far been given. They will be introduced at more appropriate points of the narrative.

Bascom, Olin, and many others, some surviving into our day, men of not only denominational but of national recognition. Extraordinary indeed, a study full of inexpressible interest and profound lessons, is the history of that singular ministerial system of Methodism which we call the itinerancy. The development of character, of energy and success which it has revealed thus far in our narrative cannot fail to astonish us. Down to the final period of our record we shall find it as potent as ever. Its roll is glorious with heroes and martyrs. What clerical men since the apostolic age ever traveled and labored like these? What public men ever sacrificed equally with them the ordinary comforts of life? Their salaries or "allowance" (for they disclaimed the word salary) scarcely provided them with clothes. We have seen the sufferings of Asbury, their bishop and prototype, from labor and poverty. His allowance was sixty-four dollars a year. His horses and carriages were given by his friends, all donations of money from whom he assigned to his fellow-sufferers, his fellow-laborers. At one of the early Western Conferences, where the assembled itinerants presented painful evidences of want, he parted with his watch, his coat, and his shirts for them.[19] He was asked by a friend to lend him fifty pounds. "He might as well have asked me for Peru," wrote the bishop; "I showed him all the money I had in the world, about twelve dollars, and gave him five." Most of the early itinerants had to locate, at last, on account of their broken health, or the sufferings of their families. Of six hundred and fifty whose names appear in the Minutes, by the close of the century, about five hundred died located, and many of the remainder were, for a longer or shorter interval, in the local ranks, but were able again to

[19] Biographical Sketches, etc., p. 35.

enter the itinerancy. Nearly half of those whose deaths are recorded died before they were thirty years old; about two thirds died before they had spent twelve years in the laborious service. They fell martyrs to their work.[20]

If ever men presented the genuine credentials of Christian apostleship these men did. They were enthusiastic, sublimely so, but they were not fanatical. A remarkable seemliness and official decorousness characterized them as a body; an ecclesiastical dignity, which was the more commanding for being simple, unpretentious, laborious, and self-sacrificing. It was impossible that some eccentric, perhaps insane minds, should not be drawn into the ever-widening circle of their enthusiastic movement; but the rigorous discipline and exhaustive labors of the denomination controlled or expended their morbid energy; or, if these failed, the rapid but steady motion of its ecclesiastical system threw them off, and so far off that they ceased to be dangerous. Into whatever position they found themselves thrown—from the itinerancy to the local ministry, from the Conference to the class-meeting—they found themselves bound by the tenacious "Rules" of the Discipline. Hence, though untutored men, without a single collegiate graduate, besides Coke, in all their ranks thus far, no important doctrinal heresy had yet disturbed them. The theological symbol of general Christendom, the Apostles' Creed, and the Anglican Articles as abridged by Wesley, had never before had a purer or more effective promulgation among the masses of the people.

It has justly been observed by a high authority that Christ wrote nothing, but is himself the book of life to be read by all; that his religion is not an outward letter,

[20] History of the Religious Movement, etc., ii, p. 466.

but free, quickening spirit; not a literary production, but a moral creation; not a new system of theology or philosophy for the learned, but the communication of the divine life to human nature for the redemption of the whole world; that he spoke, and all the words of his mouth were and still are spirit and life; that the human heart craves not a learned, letter-writing, literary Christ, but a wonder-working, cross-bearing, atoning Redeemer, risen, enthroned in heaven, and ruling the world, yet furnishing, at the same time to men and angels, inexhaustible themes of holy thoughts, discourses, writings, and songs of praise.[21] The divine life, presence, power of Christ, quickening the souls of the people, is the spiritual life of the Church; and the men who have most of this life in their own souls, and most diffuse it among the common people, are its most genuine ministry, the truest copy of its original apostleship. Can we then dispute the apostolic character of the men whose humble names are here commemorated?

I have thus recorded the "Planting and Training" of American Methodism, and may here properly conclude this part of my narrative. I have indulged myself in much, perhaps too much detail, but not merely for the purpose of rescuing early facts, which were fast evanescing, and noble characters rapidly disappearing in oblivion, but to facilitate my future labors. If I have been able to ascertain the true genius of Methodism, and its early process of development, if its Theological and Ecclesiastical platforms have been measured, its real substructure disclosed, the record of its further construction and enlargement can proceed readily and rapidly.

[21] Schaff, History of the Christian Church, p. 90.

END OF VOL. II.